

# **Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Men and Transitional Justice in Northern Uganda**

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I confirm that the word count for this thesis is less than 100,000 words, excluding the title page, contents, acknowledgments, summary or abstract, abbreviations, footnotes, diagrams, maps, illustrations, tables, appendices and references or bibliography.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the intersections between conflict-related sexual violence against men and transitional justice processes in Northern Uganda. Although male-directed sexual violence during conflict is committed more frequently than assumed, the dynamics of these crimes and male survivors' experiences remain notoriously under-explored. The marginalization of male-directed sexual violence is particularly evident in relation to transitional justice. Drawing on new empirical data, derived from seven months of field research, this thesis thereby constitutes the first-ever systematic and empirically-driven examination of how male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice, thereby illuminating the seldom-heard voices and experiences of male survivors. Further expanding the analysis, the dissertation also investigates how and to what extent prescribed transitional justice processes in Uganda address male sexual and gendered harms.

This thesis unveils a vacuum of justice in response to sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, reflective of gendered blindspots of transitional justice processes globally. Although Acholi male survivors advocate for acknowledgement, recognition and reparations, the masculine and heteronormative dimensions of formalized and standardized transitional justice processes leave male sexual and gendered harms particularly unaccounted for. Within the absence of official measures, male survivors in Acholiland attain a sense of justice on their own terms, through participation in survivors' groups. By addressing male survivors' sexual and gendered harms in different ways, groups create pathways through which male survivors can exercise agency and achieve justice on the micro-level.

Recognizing a myriad of unofficial, non-institutionalized and everyday processes as contributing to justice implies the potential to circumvent the institutionalized gendered barriers of formalized justice measures. In light of these findings, transitional justice must be emancipated from its focus on institutionalism and lifted out of its liberal rights-based approach to deliver gender-inclusive and harm-responsive justice through a masculinities lens and in response to male-directed sexual violence.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

BJP	Beyond Juba Project
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CAR	Central African Republic
CVR	Comision para la Verdad y Reconciliation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCAF	Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECCC	Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GoU	Government of the Republic of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
HSMF	Holy Spirit Mobile Forces
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IATJ	Institute for African Transitional Justice
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICD	International Crimes Division (of the High Court Uganda)
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
JLOS	Justice, Law and Order Sector
JRP	Justice and Reconciliation Project
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MOC	Men of Courage
MOH(RAU)	Men of Hope (Refugee Association Uganda)

MOP	Men of Peace
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRA/M	National Resistance Army / Movement
OTP	Office of the Prosecutor
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRDP	Peace and Recovery Development Plan
REC	Research Ethics Committee
RLP	Refugee Law Project
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SSI	South-South Institute
TFV	Trust Fund for Victims
TJWG	Transitional Justice Working Group
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UN	United Nations
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNSC(R)	United Nations Security Council (Resolution)
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WAN	Women's Advocacy Network
WHO	World Health Organization
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front
WPS	Women Peace and Security



*Illustration I: Map of Uganda*

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction - Research Rationale

During the early years of the conflict in Northern Uganda, sexual violence against men was widespread enough for the Acholi population to invent a new vocabulary to describe these crimes as *tek-gungu* (Esuruku 2011; Dolan 2011).<sup>1</sup> Across the region, this terminology “became widely used among the community because of the numerous cases of male rape attributed to the [government] soldiers” (JRP 2013: 22). Despite this suggested prevalence, however, accounts of sexual violence against men in Acholiland,<sup>2</sup> including male survivors' experiences, remain consistently under-explored, thereby mirroring the limited global attention paid to wartime gendered and sexual violence against men (Dolan 2014).

Although conflict-related sexual violence against men occurs more frequently than assumed (Sivakumaran 2007), little is known about its dynamics. Throughout the past decade, a limited yet growing body of scholarship has documented cases of conflict-related sexual violence against men and boys in at least 50 contemporary armed conflicts (Bastick et al. 2007). Despite continuous efforts to integrate male survivors into dominant conceptions of wartime rape, however, attention to sexual violence against men remains limited (Touquet and Gorris 2016). As a result, male sexual harms, as well as survivors' experiences and viewpoints, remain of peripheral concern to academics and practitioners alike (Grey and Shepherd 2012).

This marginalization of sexual violence against men is particularly evident with regards to transitional justice. Although past decades have witnessed increasing efforts towards justice in response to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (see Mertus 2004; Henry 2009; Rubio-Marin and de Greiff 2007; Boesten 2014; Buckley-Zistel 2013), specific consideration for redressing male sexual and gendered harms remains remarkably absent (RLP 2013). Barely a handful of studies

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<sup>1</sup> In Acholi language, *tek-gungu* refers to “the way which is hard to bend” (Finnström 2008), or to ‘bend over’ (*gungu*) ‘hard’ or ‘forcefully’ (*tek*) (see Chapter 5).

<sup>2</sup> Acholiland is a sub-region in Northern Uganda. The ethnic tribe of the Acholi live in Acholiland, who speak the language Acholi, a dialect of Luo. Present-day Acholiland is comprised of the districts of: Gulu, Kitgum, Agago, Pader, Nwoya, Amuru, Omoro, Nwoya. Gulu town is the capital of Gulu district, the largest political and economic hub in the region, one of the largest towns in Uganda and the epicenter of the conflict between the LRA and the Ugandan Government. For a more detailed ethnography of the Acholi and the region, see: Atkinson 1994; Behrend 1999; Finnström 2008; pBitek 1985; also see Chapter 5.

have thus far examined the nexus between transitional justice and sexual violence against men. This existing research is characterized by narrow conceptions of justice and persistently lacks empirically-grounded survivors' perspectives. Reflecting dominant transitional justice debates and approaches, prescriptive assumptions are made as to how deliver justice for this sub-population of survivors, grounded in universalist conceptions and liberal rights-based approaches. However, how male survivors of sexual violence themselves seek to respond to their violations and what justice means to them is only insufficiently examined and remains remarkably absent throughout existing scholarship.

To address this persistent lacuna in the literature, this dissertation examines transitional justice in response to conflict-related sexual violence against men. Utilizing Northern Uganda as an in-depth case study and analyzing data drawn from participatory workshop discussions with 46 male survivors, complemented by 79 key-informant interviews and two focus group discussions (see Chapter 2), I specifically analyze how male survivors of sexual violence conceptualize justice. I also investigate how and to what extent Uganda's transitional justice landscape addresses male survivors' sexual and gendered harms.

The thesis thereby constitutes the first-ever systematic empirical analysis of how to deliver justice for male sexual violence survivors in a post-conflict and transitional setting. Drawing on newly generated findings derived from richly textured field research, I illuminate the seldom-heard views and voices of male survivors directly, following an ontology from below (see Robins 2011). Integrating original empirical data into under-developed scholarly debates, this dissertation contributes to a gender-inclusive and harm-responsive understanding of justice in response to wartime male sexual violence, thus altering theorizing on transitional justice through a masculinities lens. By addressing these under-explored intersections, I position my thesis as an empirically-driven counter to the largely descriptive and normatively-infused literature on transitional justice and on conflict-related sexual violence.

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that official transitional justice processes in Northern Uganda are unavailable for male survivors of sexual violence and unresponsive to their experiences (see Chapter 8). The masculine and heteronormative values underpinning these processes create numerous gendered blindspots, leaving male sexual and gendered harms particularly un-accounted for. In this context,



unofficial and non-institutionalized processes imply the potential to circumvent the gendered barriers of formalized mechanisms and thus to deliver justice in response to wartime sexual violence against men. For the male survivors from Northern Uganda who participated in this study, and within this vacuum of official processes, victims' groups create pathways through which survivors can enact and achieve justice on their own terms in a participatory capacity and on the micro-level (see Chapter 7). In light of these findings, to deliver gender-inclusive and harm-responsive justice for male sexual violence survivors, transitional justice must be divorced from its focus on institutionalism, legalism and universalism. Such a thickened approach to the study of justice in transition (McEvoy 2008) allows to transcend numerous gendered barriers, gaps and tensions of formalized processes, while further fostering survivors' agency. Although this dissertation derives from the specific context of Northern Uganda and focuses on male survivors who are members of survivors' groups (see Chapter 2), this assessment carries wider theoretical mezzo-level utility for conceptualizing gender-sensitive transitional justice from a masculinities perspectives and in response to wartime sexual violence against men.

## **1.2. A Survivor's Testimony of Sexual Violence and Justice**

The testimony explored throughout this section offers an illustrative case study narrative for the experiences and viewpoints of male survivors that I foreground and analyze throughout this dissertation.<sup>3</sup>

"I want to leave a legacy on creating awareness about male experiences of sexual violence in armed conflict" (RLP 2014a: 6), Julius Okwera, the Chairperson of the *Men of Courage* support group for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda, states. Since joining the group in 2013, Okwera has become a leading advocate for the rights and needs of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Uganda and internationally. His journey, however, began with a painful and harmful ordeal.

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<sup>3</sup> This case study narrative about Julius Okwera's experience derives from his story as a published document by the Refugee Law Project (RLP 2014). This previously published account, which is available online, uses Okwera's real name and refers to his exact location, and I therefore follow the lead of RLP, of course with Okwera's consent. Methodological reflections on the choice to use Okwera's real name, but otherwise anonymize respondents, can be found in Chapter 2.5.

One night in April 1987, rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) camped in Okwera's homestead in rural Acholiland in Northern Uganda against his will (RLP 2014a). Neighbors and other community members, who were concerned about the rebels' presence in the area, informed the nearby stationed government soldiers about the LRA's whereabouts. At around 4 AM the next night, Okwera woke up to the sound of gumboots in his compound.<sup>4</sup> Suspecting that government soldiers of incumbent President Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) had come to interrogate him, Okwera alerted his wife and hoped to be able to go into hiding, "but the soldiers had already surrounded the homestead" (RLP 2014a: 3). The NRA cadres tried to make him to open the door, but Okwera refused. A group of soldiers eventually forced their way in and began to loot, while others stood guard outside or proceeded to neighboring compounds. Once inside the hut, the soldiers forced Okwera to get outside. "With a gun pressed against his back, Okwera was dragged outside behind his kitchen hut while his wife remained inside the hut with a number of the soldiers" (*ibid.*). The soldiers accused him "of being a father to the rebels" (*ibid.*) and after further intimidation, they ordered Okwera to kneel and bend over. He recalls,

My hesitation earned me a kick 'kwara' and a bayonet pointed in my back. Not knowing what to do, I complied. They removed my trousers and each penetrated me in turn. I could tell that those who penetrated me were three in number because each of them would do it in turn and then leave [...] (*ibid.*).

Along with many other men across the entire Acholi sub-region during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Okwera became a victim of male-directed sexual violence perpetrated by government soldiers against civilian men (see Chapter 5.3). As he was sexually violated, his wife, who was pregnant with twins at that time, was also raped by another group of soldiers who remained with her in the hut. Okwera only discovered this after the soldiers left. Three weeks later, his wife suffered a miscarriage and died soon thereafter as a result of her injuries. "It was a very traumatizing moment for the whole family" (2014: 4), Okwera narrates. During a conversation in March 2016, he recalled that he felt extremely lonely and isolated after this (*Fieldnotes, 17 March 2016*).

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<sup>4</sup> During this early period of the conflict between the LRA and the Government of Uganda, one-sided violence against the population by both the rebels and the government army was common and widespread (see Chapter 5).

Referring to his own sexual violation, Okwera attests that "it was the most painful experience ever" (RLP 2014a: 4), but he decided to keep it to himself. He did not tell his children what had happened to him, and he similarly felt that he could not report it officially, since the soldiers who committed the violence belonged to the same government that remains in power today (see Volkes and Wilkins 2017). "We didn't have any voice" (RLP 2014a: 4), Okwera said. Although crimes of male rape were widespread across the Acholi sub-region (see Chapter 5.3), nobody openly spoke about it (Finnström 2009), and survivors had no opportunity or space to share their stories or narrate their testimonies. Okwera himself likewise did not share his experience, because he felt that it was too dehumanizing and shameful (RLP 2014a). Across the sub-region, sexual violence against men continues to be highly stigmatized (Dolan 2009; see Chapter 5).

During the mid- and late 1990s, the government forced up to 95 percent of the civilian population in Northern Uganda into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps (Branch 2011), which according to Dolan (2009) constituted their own form of 'social torture'. In the camps, rumors spread about who was a victim of male rape or other humiliations. Even though Okwera knew that he was not alone and that others must have endured similar experiences, he only knew of one other isolated case, and did not know any of the other survivors personally.

In 1999, Okwera nevertheless reported his violation to the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) office in Gulu. After more than twelve years of silence, he had gathered the courage to report his perceived degrading victimization. The Commission, however, turned him away, "arguing that the violations occurred before their mandate" (RLP 2014a: 4). Okwera felt extremely demoralized and disappointed. Although he (at least temporarily) accepted the stigmatization, he was turned away without any support. He had been denied the opportunity to share his testimony, be listened to and to seek justice and redress.<sup>5</sup>

During the post-encampment period (since ~ 2006), rumors continued to spread within the communities about different violations and humiliations committed during the conflict, and Okwera's children became inquisitive and demanded to know what happened to him and how their mother died. "I became deeply troubled and had

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<sup>5</sup> Aside from the UHRC, there were no other human rights institutions operating at that time where Okwera could have reported his violation.

nightmares about that experience" (RLP 2014a: 5), Okwera recalls. To cope, he joined a church group and regularly attended local counseling sessions as well as community events organized by different civil society actors. During one of these community-based events in 2008, Okwera met staff from the Refugee Law Project (RLP). He explained that they "listened carefully" (*ibid.*) to what he had to say. After some consideration and the development of mutual trust, he decided to share his full testimony with them. The fact that RLP staff *listened carefully* and did not further silence or ignore him, as previous actors or bodies did, was a paramount factor for Okwera to break his silence.

Despite early hesitation, and after a long and continuous process of building relationships, fellow survivors eventually shared their experiences as well, "talking about '*tek-gungu*'<sup>6</sup> and encouraging victims of other [sexual] violations to tell their stories and support one another" (*ibid.*). Coordinated by Okwera, a support group was formed: *The Men of Courage*. Exclusively composed of and led by survivors, the group primarily engages in peer-counseling, income-generating activities and advocacy (Edström, Dolan et al. 2016; RLP 2014a; see Chapter 7.3). For Okwera, as well as for many other male survivors, being in this group facilitates a sense of justice on the micro-level, as I analyze in Chapter 7.

Today, Okwera has narrated his testimony on his own terms, and his account has been published by RLP (2014) and is featured in two widely viewed video documentaries (RLP 2009, 2011). He has narrated his testimony and articulated male survivors' needs and demands in various forums regionally, nationally and internationally.<sup>7</sup> Currently, he continues to coordinate the *Men of Courage* support group, raises awareness and advocates for justice and redress on behalf of male survivors of sexual violence. He thus actively transitioned from victimhood and survivorhood towards being an activist and advocate (see Dolan, Edström et al. 2016; *Men of Hope* 2015).

Okwera's narrative, and in particular his contemporary role as an advocate, in many ways is exceptional and thus not necessarily representative for the majority of male

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<sup>6</sup> See supra note 1.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Okwera narrated his experience locally in Gulu in Northern Uganda during the 6<sup>th</sup> Institute for African Transitional Justice (IATJ) in May and June 2016; nationally in Kampala, Uganda during the 1<sup>st</sup> South-South Institute (SSI) on sexual violence against men and boys in 2013; and internationally during the 2<sup>nd</sup> South-South Institute (SSI) on sexual violence against men and boys in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in May 2015.

survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda. Nevertheless, his experience and his viewpoints, as well as his inspiring transformation, are certainly illustrative for many of the arguments I make throughout this dissertation. For Okwera, just as for many male survivors of sexual violence, justice is an unfolding and manifold process, centered around recognition and delivered on the micro-level through participation in survivors' groups.

### **1.3. Gender, Masculinities and Transitional Justice**

Throughout this section, I situate this dissertation in relation to previous research and dominant theoretical framings in scholarship on gender, armed conflict and transitional justice. I also evidence different lacunae within these intersecting fields of research, and indicate how this thesis seeks to address these gaps.

By examining conflict-related sexual violence against men in relation to transitional justice processes, this dissertation lies at the intersections of two prominently growing and inter-related (sub-)fields of scholarship: gendered examinations of armed conflict (see Sjoberg 2013; Moser and Clark 2001; Sjoberg and Tickner 2013) and transitional justice research (see O'Rourke 2013; Buckley-Zistel and Stanley 2013). I engage with and contribute to both of these areas of study in empirical as well as conceptual terms (see Chapter 1.4). Broadly situated within the social sciences and humanities, this study is inter- and multi-disciplinary, drawing from political science, sociology and anthropology. I primarily engage with gender studies (including masculinities studies and feminist international relations theorizing), and scholarship on armed conflicts, while being inspired by ethnographic and anthropological approaches to research.

#### **1.3.1 Armed Conflict, Gender and Masculinities**

According to Sjoberg (2013), "the great majority of studies seeking constitutive understandings of or causal explanations for war do not consider gender [...] as potential causes or elements [...]" (4). Although the study of armed conflict was traditionally silent on gender (see Carpenter 2002; Tickner 1997), recent decades witnessed an increasing utilization of gender lenses and particularly diverse feminist

theories<sup>8</sup> to elucidate the gendered dimensions of armed conflicts (see Cockburn 1998; Goldstein 2003; Moser and Clark 2001; Sjoberg and Via 2010; Tickner 2001). Predominantly guided by feminist curiosities to comprehend, unravel and uproot patriarchal structures and gendered inequalities within theatres of war (Enloe 2004), a diverse set of studies increasingly seeks to examine conflict, violence and peace-building through a gender lens (Ní Aoláin et al. 2011; O'Rourke 2013; Duncanson 2015; Zarkov 2001). As emphasized by Cockburn (2001), "being alert to the power relations of gender enables us to see features of armed conflict and political violence that are otherwise overlooked" (13). Echoing Sjoberg (2013) I thus emphasize that wars and armed conflicts cannot be fully understood without centralizing gender.

Throughout much of the scholarly literature on violence and conflict, however, employing a 'gender perspective' is frequently perceived as exclusively highlighting the roles, needs and rights of women (see Theidon 2007). Owing to the pervasive marginalization of women and female experiences, during conflict and beyond, such a focus is urgently needed and warranted (see Ward 2017; Pankhurst 2003). Carpenter (2002) attests that gender analyses are traditionally associated with feminism, and as a consequence, "scholars working in non-feminist traditions face disciplinary barriers to appropriating gender in conventional frameworks" (159). In light of this, Dolan (2015) attests that "[i]f gender is a potentially powerful analytical, practical and political engine, it is one which is currently firing on only half its cylinders" (2).

In fact, despite the increasing utilization of gender lenses, specific masculinities perspectives and careful consideration for men and their gendered experiences (see Hamber 2016; Theidon 2007; Kirby and Henry 2012) often are missing from gendered analyses of armed conflicts (see Cahn and Ní Aoláin 2010; Dolan 2015).<sup>9</sup> By examining men's gendered lived realities of sexual violence and their gender-

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<sup>8</sup> Different strands of feminist theory include, amongst others, liberal and mainstream feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism and post-colonial feminism or cultural feminism (see Ahmed 2016).

<sup>9</sup> However, interrogating situations of armed conflict through a masculinities lens and paying sustained attention to men's gendered experiences and roles during war must not be misappropriated towards diverting attention from women's experiences and feminist voices and approaches. Examinations of masculinities can therefore not be decoupled from examinations of femininities (as well as other non-binary gender identities) and patriarchal gender hierarchies more broadly. Rather, studies of men's roles and experiences in (post-)conflict contexts, such as in this dissertation, must maintain a holistic gendered focus and must be linked to, situated in and complement examinations of women's experiences.

specific conceptions of justice through a masculinities lens, this study thus taps into an embryonic and under-theorized field of scholarship, seeking to make several empirical and conceptual contributions, to be further laid out throughout this chapter.<sup>10</sup>

### **1.3.2. Masculine Vulnerabilities During Armed Conflicts**

Since crimes of sexual and gender-based violence against men are immediately underpinned by masculinities (Dolan 2014; Carpenter 2003; see Chapters 3 and 6), utilizing a masculinity lens - i.e. foregrounding the roles, structuring and positioning of socially constructed masculine identities, and highlighting the experiences of men and boy (or of masculine actors) as gendered - is inevitable. Throughout this section, I briefly introduce key concepts and map out prevalent debates within masculinities scholarship, to be further expanded upon in Chapter 3.2, thereby situating my study in relation to existing research.

Thoroughly conceptualized and scrutinized context-specifically in Chapter 6, masculinities are socially constructed gender norms, referring to the multiple ways of 'doing male' (see Connell 2000; Harland et. al. 2005; Hamber 2016). Over the past decades, a growing body of literature begun to pay critical attention to masculinities and their relations to and positioning in the global gender order, including their roles in political and social structuring (Connell 1995; Kimmel 2010; Cleaver 2002; Messerschmidt 1993). Although still under-researched, the study of masculinities in recent years increasingly extended towards analyses of armed conflicts (see Dolan 2002; Hollander 2014; Theidon 2009). Consequently, and despite a prevailing lack of systematic academic attention to masculinities during conflicts and transition (Hamber 2016), a "fairly substantial amount of literature has been generated over the years regarding the forms of masculinity that emerge in times of armed conflict and war" (Cahn, Ní Aoláin and Haynes 2011: 104). However, while the roles of masculinities during armed conflict are increasingly recognized and attended to, this "research has tended to be focused on certain groups and to employ a relatively

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<sup>10</sup> Caution is also required as to not simplistically reinforce gender binaries, which "have been remarkably consistent across time, place and culture in human social and political relations" (Sjoberg 2016: 4). Therefore, despite this study's centralization of masculinities, careful consideration for gender as a fluid spectrum and for the elasticity of gender identities is required. The inclusive recognition of gender non-conforming, intersex and/or trans\* or queer identities is consequently necessary to fully comprehend studies of war (Bueno-Hansen 2015; Sjoberg 2016).

narrow scope", Myrntinen et al. argue (2016: 1). Indeed, most dominant research on men and masculinities within the context of war focuses on the 'violences of men' (Hearn 1998) and the linkages between masculinities and the various forms of aggression and violence perpetrated by them (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009; Higate and Hopton 2005; Higate 2003).

All too often, these examinations have (re-)produced an unreconstructed view of men as universal aggressors and women as universal victims during armed conflicts (Dolan 2015, 2011; Carpenter 2006; Coulter 2009; MacKenzie 2012; Baines 2016). This, however, is a gross "over-simplification that both reinforces ideas about violence being natural to men and fails to explain for women's roles in conflict" (Cleaver 2002: 17). Problematically, the literature's focus on hyper-<sup>11</sup> and militarized masculinities omits attention to the gendered identities and experiences of non-violent and non-combatant males, who arguably constitute the majority of men during most situations of armed conflict globally (see Carpenter 2003; Wright 2014). MacKenzie and Foster (2017) similarly note that "although there is a rich and growing literature on masculinities and war, there remains little understanding of how non-combatant civilian men and civilian masculinities are impacted by war, conflict, occupation and militarization" (210). Further, non-heterosexual masculinities in particular are largely rendered invisible by dominant heteronormative gendered narratives of war (Myrntinen et al. 2016). As a consequence, male vulnerabilities and men as victims are only insufficiently addressed.

Throughout scholarship and praxis, male vulnerabilities in theaters of war are frequently overlooked, largely due to stereotypical gender assumptions about men's roles in society (Sorensen 2011; Hollander 2014). As critically deconstructed by Martha Fineman (2008), "vulnerability is universal and constant, inherent in the human condition, [...] arising from our embodiment, which carries with it the ever-present possibility of harm, injury and misfortune [...] (9). Somewhat ironically, however, although vulnerability is ultimately beyond human control (*ibid.*; see Arendt 1958), dominant assumptions of gender, especially in patriarchal and heteronormative contexts, nevertheless presume masculinities to be incompatible

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<sup>11</sup> Angela Harris defines hyper masculinity as a form of "masculinity in which the structures against femininity and homosexuality are especially intense and in which physical strength and aggressiveness are paramount" (2000: 793).



with victimhood (see Connell 2002), thereby expecting men to be invulnerable. Owing to these socially constructed premises, the intersections between masculinities and vulnerabilities, despite a few noteworthy exceptions (see Dolan 2002; Turner 2017), remain heavily under-theorized and under-researched. It therefore seems that "we do not really have any idea of the full extent of male vulnerability" (Dolan 2011: 135) in conflict scenarios.<sup>12</sup> To obtain a realistic and holistic understanding of the workings and functioning of gender in conflict-affected contexts, however, "the scope of studying masculinities in these situations needs to be broadened to go beyond merely examining the violences of men" (Myrtilinen et al. 2016: 1), to include male vulnerabilities.

### ***Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Men***

Although consistently under-researched, a growing yet limited body of scholarship examines conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence against men and boys (see Chapter 3), which constitute a scholarly and politically relevant entry-point for analyzing masculine vulnerabilities in conflict settings. The past decade in particular witnessed an increase in research on sexual violence against men by academics and humanitarian actors alike (see Chapter 3; also see Bastick et al. 2007; Carpenter 2006; Dolan 2014; Féron 2015; Sivakumaran 2007). Despite some newly gained attention (Touquet and Gorris 2016) and various important theoretical (Sjoberg 2016), empirical (Dolan 2014) and political inroads (UN 2013), however, much remains unknown about the dynamics of male-directed sexual violence. In Chapter 3, I evidence numerous lacunae in the growing literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men, some of which this dissertation seeks to address. In particular, male survivors' lived realities and their perspectives on various aspects remain strikingly under-explored. This dissertation seeks to address these gaps, by integrating novel empirical data on male survivors' experiences of harm and viewpoints on justice into otherwise descriptive and under-theorized discourses characterized by a lack of empirical data.

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<sup>12</sup> In particular the seemingly subtle and everyday gendered harms and vulnerabilities experienced by men in conflict-affected contexts, during displacement or under violent and militant occupation remain particularly neglected (Turner 2017; MacKenzie and Foster 2017).

### 1.3.3. Gender and Transitional Justice

While a masculinities lens is increasingly applied to examinations of armed conflicts, this has not yet sufficiently travelled towards post-conflict and transitional contexts (Hamber 2007). Societies transitioning out of conflict thus "present a unique and under-analyzed site of examination for masculinities" (Cahn, Ní Aoláin and Haynes 2009: 105). Even though the field of transitional justice is inherently masculine (O'Rourke 2013), transitional justice processes have yet to be sufficiently analyzed through a masculinities lens (Hamber 2007, 2016; Theidon 2009).<sup>13</sup> In Chapter 4, I identify a persistent gap in the growing transitional justice literature that does not sufficiently engage with masculinities, and especially not with masculine vulnerabilities. A sustained masculinities perspective on justice in transition thus remains under-developed, a lacuna that the theoretical exploration in Chapter 4 seeks to engage with. Hamber (2016) attests that "the issue of masculinity and transitional justice could still at best only be described as emergent" (11). He further argues that "the first entry into thinking about masculinity more seriously in the transitional field will invariably come through an engagement with male [survivors] of sexual violence [...]" (*ibid.*: 17), as per the focus of this study.

Comprehensively defined, conceptualized and theorized in Chapter 4, transitional justice broadly "refers to the set of measures implemented [...] to deal with the legacies of massive human rights abuses" (de Greiff 2012: 34) in the aftermath of armed conflicts, dictatorships or authoritarian regimes (see Buckley-Zistel et al. 2014). Throughout the past two decades, the study of transitional justice has widened (Bell et al. 2007), expanded (Hansen 2014) and globalized (Teitel 2015). As part of a rapid normalization and expansion process (McEvoy 2007), transitional justice is continuously broadened to be applicable to new contexts and new forms of violations (Buckley-Zistel et al. 2014), including sexual and gender-based violence (Boesten 2014; Chappell 2011) and women's conflict-related experiences (Ní Aoláin 2012; O'Rourke 2013).

In a seminal article from 2007, Bell and O'Rourke posed the critical questions of "where are women, where is gender, and where is feminism in transitional justice?"

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<sup>13</sup> Similarly, on a policy-level, the vast majority of practical transitional justice and peace-building mechanisms and processes globally frequently turn a blind eye to masculinities, and in particular to the salient links between manhood, weapons and violence (Theidon 2009).

(2007: 23). Since then, gender has developed to become "a burgeoning focus of investigation within transitional justice scholarship and practice globally" (O'Rourke 2016: 1). Despite this increasing focus on gender, however, the "feminist presence in transitional justice is complex, multilayered and still in the process of engagement" (Ní Aoláin 2012: 1). A decade since Bell and O'Rourke's (2007) call for feminist theorizing within transitional justice, "gender parity [still] remains elusive in transitional justice implementation" (Ní Aoláin 2016: 1), and numerous gendered experiences remain unaccounted for.

Even though there continues to be a "capture problem with gendered harms" (Ní Aoláin 2012: 20) in transitional justice, past decades nevertheless "radically altered the treatment of gendered violence [...]" (Franke 2006: 816). The most prevalent utilization of gender in transitional justice comes through an engagement with sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (Chappell 2011, 2014; Henry 2009). Despite increasing consideration for SGBV by diverse transitional justice mechanisms (see Buckley-Zistel and Stanley 2013), including reparations (Rubio-Marin and de Greiff 2007; Walker 2015) or truth and reconciliation commissions (Ross 2003a; Theidon 2012), the transitional justice literature on sexual violence is dominated by an almost exclusive emphasis on retributive justice and criminal prosecutions (Campbell 2007; Henry 2009).<sup>14</sup>

Arguably, this focus on prosecutions, coupled with a violation-centric view and thin conceptions of gendered violence as narrowly confined to sexual violence against women resulted in limited and exclusionary gender justice developments (Buckley-Zistel 2013). A narrow legalistic lens risks sidelining other quasi- or non-judicial transitional justice mechanisms, while stereotypical conceptions of gender overshadow structural gendered inequalities and conflict-related sexual violence against men and boys. As argued by Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine (2015), "a limited understanding of who can be a victim of sexual [and gendered] harm means that violence against men is often unseen and unaccounted for [...]" (97) in the implementation of transitional justice processes. In this dissertation I broaden this

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<sup>14</sup> Despite this over-concentration on international criminal justice in redressing sexual violence, however, the actual number of prosecutions - whether at the domestic, national or international level - remains appallingly low (see Chappell 2011, 2014).

approach, by analyzing how to deliver justice male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda and by moving beyond narrow conceptions of judicial justice.

#### **1.3.4. Transitional Justice and Sexual Violence against Men**

Situated within these broader research gaps, the nexus between male-directed sexual violence and transitional justice remains particularly under-researched and insufficiently addressed. In this section, I reveal and evidence this particular lacuna, as addressed by this dissertation.

Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine (2015) observe that "while significant political attention has been generated for sexual violence against women, tailored intervention to address male-centred sexual harms remains elusive and marginalized" (109). Male sexual and gendered harms have only insufficiently been dealt with in transitional justice practice and jurisprudence (Schulz 2015). Despite a few exceptional cases involving crimes of sexual violence against men in the international criminal justice arena, most notably at the ICTY, transitional justice instruments have thus far almost entirely turned a blind eye to the experiences of sexually violated men in conflict zones. Within this context, Buckley-Zistel and Stanley (2013) observe a tendency of excluding crimes of sexual violence against men from the gendered analytical frames of transitional justice processes. Few studies have examined transitional justice in response to sexual violence against males (see RLP 2013; Sivakumaran 2013; Zawati 2007; Manivannan 2014).<sup>15</sup> As I argue elsewhere, "throughout this restricted body of literature, a heavy [if not even exclusive] emphasis is placed on retributive justice and judicial accountability" (Schulz 2015: 39) as well as on institutionalized processes, thereby marginalizing un-institutionalized or quasi- and non-judicial measures.

For instance, an article by Sivakumaran (2013) exclusively focuses on prosecuting sexual violence against men and boys, while a seminal study by the Refugee Law Project (RLP 2013) concentrates on domestic and international judicial accountability for conflict-related sexual violence against men. Manivannan's (2014) work on *seeking justice for male victims of sexual violence in conflict* looks at trials

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<sup>15</sup> As I problematize in more detail in Chapter 3.2, conflict-related sexual violence against men is often conceptualized and coded as torture (see Leiby 2009). Some studies have therefore indirectly touched upon male sexual victimization in relation to transitional justice, but without really examining these crimes as such.

and truth commissions, thus only approaching transitional justice in narrowed and institutionalized terms. Likewise, a recent study by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ 2016) on *addressing sexual violence against men and boys in transitional contexts* narrowly approaches transitional justice through an institutionalism frame following a tool-kit approach, while paying particular attention to international criminal jurisprudence and various international tribunals. This exclusive focus, which mirrors earlier legalistic transitional justice trends (see McEvoy 2007; see Chapter 4.3.1), sidelines other non-, semi- or quasi-judicial measures and un-institutionalized transitional justice processes.

In addition to this narrow focus on institutionalized and prosecutorial processes, the severely restricted body of literature on transitional justice and male-directed sexual violence also lacks an empirically-grounded survivors' perspective. Attempts to localize the field and practice of transitional justice in recent years (see Shaw and Waldorf 2010; McEvoy and McGregor 2008; see Chapter 4.3.3) resulted in growing awareness about the significance of survivor consultations (UN 2004; Robins 2011; Lundy and McGovern 2008), expected to contribute to evidence-based transitional justice (van der Merwe et al. 2009; Pham and Vinck 2010). The UN (2014) likewise recognized that it is "important to ensure that victims of SGBV are consulted effectively, [...] and that their rights and perspectives are adequately reflected" (4).

Thus far, however, previous studies have failed to systematically consult male survivors on their post-conflict conceptions of justice, in Northern Uganda and elsewhere. A UN study (2014) clearly states that "more efforts are needed to ensure that transitional justice processes address the full spectrum of gender-based and sexual violence" and that the "[e]ffective participation of victims and participatory procedures are necessary to address different needs and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys" (1).<sup>16</sup> This rhetorical inclusion, however, has not yet materialized into implementation. Consequentially, male survivors' conceptions of justice and their perspectives on different transitional justice processes from a masculinities standpoint remain remarkably absent, both from the scholarly literature

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<sup>16</sup> While the UN study here explicitly includes men and boys as victims of sexual violence, paragraph five adds the caveat that "although men and boys are also targets of gender-based and sexual violence in conflict situations, the victims of such violence continue to be disproportionately women and girls" (UN 2014: 3). Thereafter, the study employs female pronouns when referring to survivors of sexual violence, and does not specifically discuss the gender-specific and potentially differing needs of men and boys. Despite initial rhetorical inclusion, male survivors are therefore excluded from the analysis.

as well as from transitional justice praxis. This dissertation seeks to address this particular research gap, by examining Northern Uganda as a micro-level case study.

## **1.4. The Research Project**

Situated within these bodies of scholarship and engaging with these gaps in the existing literature, this dissertation explores the intersections between transitional justice processes and crimes of sexual violence against men, specifically focusing on Northern Uganda. In this section, I introduce the research project in more depth, by articulating the primary and subsidiary research questions underpinning this scientific inquiry and by specifying the purpose of the research and the study's contributions.

### **1.4.1. Research Questions**

Utilizing Northern Uganda as an in-depth single case study, the central research question guiding this dissertation asks:

*How do male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice?*

Phrased differently, in this dissertation I inquire what justice means for Acholi male sexual violence survivors. A set of subsidiary questions, seconding the primary examination and expanding the room for analysis and additional findings, are:

*How and to what extent do transitional justice processes in Northern Uganda respond to male sexual and gendered harms and vulnerabilities?*

*How can transitional justice processes deliver gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence?*

*What does a gender-sensitive and harm-responsive (re-)conceptualization of transitional justice through a masculinities lens entail?*

Since from a conceptual standpoint, understandings and priorities with regard to justice invariably depend upon prior experiences of harm and injustice (see Douzinas 2000; Teitel 2000), the analysis also seeks to investigate:

*What are the gendered and sexual harms experienced by male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Northern Uganda?*

#### **1.4.2. Research Purpose and Contributions**

In response to these research questions and by drawing upon original empirical findings (see Chapter 2), I develop an empirically-driven and theory-guided understanding of gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice for male sexual violence survivors through a masculinities lens. I explore how male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice, and investigate to what extent and how prescribed transitional justice processes respond to sexual violence against men. I thereby juxtapose survivors' views on justice with dominant efforts towards justice in transitional contexts, to scrutinize synergies, gaps and limitations between prescribed and externally-driven processes as well as survivors' priorities and needs. Although situated at the micro-level, and drawing upon the specific context of Northern Uganda, especially my theoretical exploration of a gender-sensitive and harm-responsive re-conceptualization of justice in response to male-directed sexual violence through a masculinities lens travels to the mezzo- and macro-level.

#### ***Contributions to the Literature***

Constituting the first-ever empirically-guided analysis of transitional justice in response to conflict-related sexual violence against men, this dissertation implies numerous empirical, conceptual and theoretical contributions to existing research. These contributions primarily speak to the growing research fields of scholarship on transitional justice from a gender perspective and on conflict-related sexual violence.

By empirically integrating male sexual violence survivors' perspectives on justice in transition into dominant transitional justice discourses, this thesis contributes towards re-conceptualizing and inclusively gendering debates about transitional justice from a masculinities perspective. In particular, I foster an empirically-grounded and theoretical understanding of how to deliver harm-responsive and gender-inclusive justice for male sexual violence survivors who are situated at the peripheries and margins of dominant transitional justice debates. The study thus contributes towards on-going attempts to craft evidence-based transitional justice (van der Merwe 2009; Pham and Vinck 2010). Foregrounding survivors' viewpoints on justice, and

broadening the scope of transitional justice beyond prosecutorial and institutionalized means, this study thus contributes novel empirical data and thereby immediately addresses a persistent gap in the transitional justice literature.

In addition to this primary focus on transitional justice for male sexual violence survivors, the dissertation carries numerous additional contributions to scholarship on armed conflict and gender in general, and on conflict-related sexual violence in particular. Examining masculinities in relation to male sexual harms and vulnerabilities within Northern Uganda's hetero-patriarchal context contributes towards breaking with scholarship's dominant tradition of primarily examining the 'violences of men' (Hearn 1998), which often lack analyses of non-violent masculinities and men and boys as victims of conflict. Scrutinizing the under-researched and under-theorized intersections between masculinities and vulnerabilities in conflict settings, this study thus advances a general understanding about gendered conflict dynamics.

By attending to the lived realities of male survivors of sexual violence, I furthermore reframe and re-conceptualize debates about conflict-related sexual violence. Integrating the experiences and perspectives of male survivors from Northern Uganda into conceptually-dominated and often descriptive scholarly debates (see Chapter 3) significantly uproots and advances what is assumed to be known about sexual violence during war. In particular, the empirical findings underpinning this study contribute towards a locally-grounded and deconstructed understanding of the impact of sexual violence on male survivors' masculinities (see Chapter 6). Likewise, the utilization and further development of the theoretical framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016; Chapter 6.5) to conceptualize male survivors' gendered and sexual harms implies theoretical contributions for scholarship on conflict-related sexual violence against men, and alters theorizing on wartime rape (see Sjöberg 2016).

The study also constitutes the first-ever systematic analysis of conflict-related sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, that despite its widespread nature remains under-explored (see Chapter 5). Based upon new findings, this dissertation thus complements and further enriches context-specific scholarship on the Northern Ugandan conflict (see Baines 2014; Finnström 2008; Dolan 2009; Porter 2016).



### ***Relevance for Policy, Praxis and Survivors***

Findings deriving from the research not only constitute valuable scholarly and academic contributions, but may also help to inform and guide policy discourses around responses to sexual violence. The policy arena, and especially the United Nations, has slowly begun to pay more sustained attention to conflict-related sexual violence against men (see UNOCHA 2008; UN 2013). In relation to transitional justice, a UN study (2014) specifically emphasized the need to better understand victim-centric conceptions of justice, requiring specific attention to male sexual violence survivors. With the examination in this dissertation, I seek to respond to this call. The discussion throughout this dissertation can similarly aid transitional justice practitioners and policy-makers to develop and design processes of dealing with the past that are more gender-inclusive and better responsive to male survivors' harms and needs.

The thesis likewise aims to imply tangible progress for male survivors of sexual violence and for the associations they form, primarily in Northern Uganda. Towards this end, the findings generated by the analysis aim to aid Acholi male survivors in advocating for their justice-related demands, and to equip them with data and information to articulate their justice needs (see Chapter 2). Survivors repeatedly reiterated the relevance of this study, for themselves and for their groups (see Chapter 7.3). For instance, survivors emphasized that "what you are researching is very important" (*Workshop 2*), and that "we are glad you are investigating this" (*Workshop 3*). A service-provider working with male survivors and on transitional justice issues likewise stated that "there is currently no knowledge about this, but to achieve justice for male survivors of sexual violence here in Uganda, we need to know what they want" (*Interview, 3 March 2016*).

### **1.5. 'The long stick cannot kill a snake'**

In Northern Uganda's sub-region of Acholiland, much socio-cultural knowledge and wisdom is communicated via the medium of proverbs (p'Bitek 1985). What Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) writes about the Igbo ('Ibo' in the novel) in Nigeria - that "proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (7) - similarly applies to the Acholi in Northern Uganda. The careful reader will notice that throughout the dissertation, where appropriate, I attempt to illustrate certain

contextual and culturally-specific interpretations or arguments through Acholi proverbs or idioms. One specific Acholi proverb, which I introduce here, is utilized as a guiding framework for this dissertation in three distinct ways. This application specifically concerns (1) theoretical and conceptual, (2) methodological and ontological, as well as (3) analytical elements. The Acholi proverb states that: *Odoo mabor pe neko twol'* - a long stick cannot kill a snake. Inspired by Holly Porter's (2013) utilization of this proverb in her work, I borrow the proverb from Okot p'Bitek's (1985) collection of Acholi sayings.<sup>17</sup>

The proverb's explanation or interpretation, as put forward by p'Bitek and Porter, goes as follows: if one tries to hit and kill a snake with a long stick, and is thereby far away from the snake, the snake will inevitably curl around the end of the long stick, latching on. As the stick is raised to deliver another blow or stroke, there is a risk that the snake releases and falls on the head of the person who is holding the stick. Being far away from the snake with a long stick consequently does not work, but can instead prove counter-productive. Instead, one has to get close to the snake, with a short stick, and deliver strong and decisive hits in order to kill it. The morale of the proverb, according to both p'Bitek and Porter, is that: "If you are too far away from a problem, you cannot contribute to the solution" (Porter 2013: 107). Instead, one needs to get close to the problem in order to deal with it, resolve it and contribute to a potential solution.

Based upon this interpretation, I firstly utilize this Acholi proverb in methodological and epistemological terms: I get close to the stories, experiences and lived realities of male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda, and listen to their perspectives about justice. I therefore follow an ontology from below, guided by the experiences and viewpoints of survivors and respondents themselves (Robins 2011). This attentiveness to survivors' perspectives is crucial in order to get close to and contribute to a solution (thus metaphorically using a short stick), instead of listening only to, for instance, external service-providers, and therefore being too far away from the problem (which metaphorically resembles using a long stick).

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<sup>17</sup> I first heard and have been inspired about the utilization of the proverb by Holly Porter. During her presentation at the 6<sup>th</sup> Institute for African Transitional Justice (IATJ) in Gulu in May 2016 she referred to the proverb, which is also included in her PhD thesis on 'Justice after rape' (Porter 2013).

Secondly, conceptually, I get close to the 'problem' by carefully analyzing and understanding the harms experienced by male survivors of sexual violence prior to considering appropriate responses, remedies or justice processes. I thus get close to the 'problem', or the harm resulting from the violations, in order to identify an appropriate 'solution'. This will be done in Chapter 6, which unpacks and deconstructs the harms experienced by male survivors of sexual violence, specifically examining how sexual violence impacts and may compromise male survivors' gender identities. As argued by Porter (2013), any appropriate response to wrongdoing and crimes "must begin with an understanding of the act itself, and how it is perceived in terms of its damage and harm" (69). Ruth Rubio-Marin and Sandoval (2011) similarly argue, "properly identifying the consequences and harms ensuing from the violations is crucial to determine adequate [responses]" (1067).

Thirdly, analytically, I argue and demonstrate that in responding to sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, justice mechanisms and processes must be contextual, culturally appropriate and in direct response to local needs and concerns in order to deliver justice or to contribute to the solution (Shaw and Waldorf 2010). Rather than 'distanced' responses to violence and crime (Gready 2005), solutions that are close to the problem (Porter 2013), embedded in the local context (Gready 2005) and driven by conflict-affected communities themselves (Baines 2010) are necessary. This approach follows how Porter (2013) utilizes the proverb in her work.

### ***Methodological Reflections***

Although I draw on the experiences of male survivors and at times include their testimonies of violence and abuse (see Chapter 2), as illustrated by the case study narrative which opened this Introduction (RLP 2014a), I am mindful of not engaging in what others have termed a 'pornography of violence' (Stiglmayer 1994; Theidon 2012). I therefore do not describe in detail the violent sexual acts perpetrated against male survivors as at times narrated to me by research participants themselves. Rather, I concentrate on survivors' harms and consequences, as well as on their views on justice, as per the focus of this study. Despite this approach and awareness, however, I extensively draw upon survivors' testimonies, statements and viewpoints, in an attempt of avoiding the all too common "problem of speaking for others" (Alcoff 1991) - of negating others the opportunity to speak in their own words, on

their own terms. Important feminist critique has previously argued that "speaking for others is arrogant, vain, unethical and politically illegitimate" (*ibid.*: 6), and so I seek to let survivors speak for themselves by (re-)citing their views and words. In doing so, I concur with Boesten (2014) that "in order to understand the gendered nature of war, we need to listen to the complex experiences of women [and men] beyond any prewritten assumptions and scripts [...]" (112).

Furthermore, by concentrating on male survivors of sexual violence, under no circumstances do I mean to divert attention from and resources for female sexual violence survivors, who across time and space remain disproportionately affected by such violence. I also do not mean to hierarchically classify wartime male rape in comparison to sexual violence against women, or other conflict-related harms experienced by women and men alike. As poignantly stated by Audre Lorde (1983), "there is no hierarchy of oppressions" (9).

## **1.6. Outline of the Thesis**

The following section provides an outline of the thesis and a summary of my main findings and arguments in each of the respective chapters.

Following this introduction, in Chapter 2 I describe the research process and offer methodological and ethical reflections. Chapter 2 methodologically positions the dissertations and provides a methodological rationale for the in-depth case study selection of Northern Uganda. Within the context of rigorously describing my diverse data collection techniques, I specifically lay out the collaborative and participatory approach which underpinned the overall research process and which contributed towards decolonizing the research relationship. Due to the immense sensitivity of conducting research on sexual violence within the context of war and armed conflict (Wood 2006a), throughout the chapter I critically reflect on the ethical implications of my methodological choices.

In Chapter 3, I systematically review and situate myself in existing research on conflict-related sexual violence against men. The critical literature review foregrounds numerous gaps in the growing yet limited research field on male-directed sexual violence within the context of armed conflict. I especially show how existing research remains largely descriptive and under-theorized and often lacks

empirically-founded insights, particularly about male survivors' experiences and perspectives. Drawing on existing research, I demonstrate that sexual violence against men occurs more frequently than popularly assumed (see Sivakumaran 2007), which consequentially requires reconsideration and reconfiguration of current approaches to and examinations of gender and conflict. Chapter 3 also scrutinizes different definitional attempts of understanding sexual violence against men, identifying conceptual limitations within the majority of existing definitions. I likewise provide an overview of the literature's stand on the scope, prevalence and forms of sexual violence as well as on different explanations for the occurrence of male-directed sexual violence.

Chapter 4 constitutes the theoretical framework to guide the analysis, by conceptualizing the understanding of justice to be utilized throughout the dissertation. Drawing upon previous research on justice and dealing with the past, I develop a broadened and widened theorization of transitional justice (Nickson and Braithwaite 2014), which stands in contrast to the heavy retributive focus through a legalistic lens which continues to characterize dominant understandings of justice in transition (see Robins 2011). Instead, transitional justice as utilized throughout this dissertation accommodates numerous conceptions of justice, culturally- contingent measures and diverse socio(-economic), cultural and political processes within a thickened approach (McEvoy 2008).

From a gender perspective, in Chapter 4, I identify a significant gap in the growing literature on gender justice that does not sufficiently engage with masculinities. Even though most transitional justice processes are invariably by, for and about men (see Ní Aoláin 2016), the heteronormative assumptions underpinning these processes (see Bueno-Hansen 2015) likewise imply that especially male sexual and gendered harms fall outside this framework and henceforth get further marginalized. At the same time, examining numerous conceptions of justice through a masculinities lens reveals that gender-inclusive and harm-responsive justice for many conflict-affected men, including male sexual violence survivors, often depends on a manifestation of and return to hetero-patriarchal gender orders. This can necessitate compromises and thus carry significant implications for gender justice and for women's equality and gender parity in transitional justice. I argue that emancipating transitional justice from the bonds of its paradigmatic institutionalism (see Sharp 2014), as part of a broader

understanding of the concept, implies the potential to address some of these gendered blind-spots and negotiate these gendered tensions.

Following these methodological and theoretical framings, in Chapters 5 to 8 I present my empirical data, and analyze and subsequently discuss my findings. Rather than separating empirical findings, analysis and theory-guided discussion into distinct chapters, as it is relatively common in the social sciences, I combine these aspects thematically throughout four analytical chapters of this dissertation. Setting the focus of the chapters thematically rather than ontologically allows me to better illuminate these inter-related themes, thus facilitating a more rigorous analysis.

Chapter 5 situates crimes of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda within the overall context of the war between the Ugandan Government and the LRA. While much has been written about the Northern Ugandan conflict (see Baines 2016; Finnström 2008; Allen and Vlassenroot 2010), crimes of male rape are poorly documented and remain almost entirely absent from any scholarly analysis of the conflict, despite few noteworthy exceptions (Dolan 2009; Esuruku 2011). Painting a detailed picture of the dynamics surrounding conflict-related male rape in Acholiland, Chapter 5 provides new empirical findings and thereby addresses this lacuna in the literature. Perpetrated by government forces of the NRA during the late 1980s and early 1990s and embedded within a complicated web of intersecting conflict dynamics, I evidence that these crimes were geographically widespread.

Deriving from this overall contextualization, in Chapter 6 I proceed to analyze male survivors' lived realities, critically examining their sexual and gendered harms. This proves important for conceptualizing how crimes of sexual violence are perceived in terms of their damage and harm, which in turn constitutes a necessary pre-condition for understanding justice in response to violence (see Porter 2013; Douzinas 2000). Chapter 6 therefore establishes how sexual violence impacts on male survivors' gender identities as men. The approach in this chapter is two-fold: First, I unpack and deconstruct the effects of conflict-related sexual violence on male survivors' masculinities, departing from a prior contextual-empirical construction and thick descriptions of Acholi gender relations and identities. I evidence that these effects are a multi-layered process, rather than a single event, commencing with the initial sexual violation and extending via numerous physical, psychological and physiological sexual and gendered harms.

Second, I critique the literature's dominant approach of theorizing wartime sexual violence against men as 'emasculatation' by way of 'feminization' and/or 'homosexualization' (see Sivakumaran 2005). Borrowing from Edström, Dolan et al. (2016), I instead propose and further develop the conceptual framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood' to account for the impact of conflict-related sexual violence against men on gender identities. This conceptual frame accommodates the lived experiences of male (and female) survivors of sexual violence in a more gender-inclusive, fluid and less static capacity, without freezing dynamic experiences into time and space. By further developing this theoretical frame, I contribute to uprooting dominant conceptualizations of conflict-related sexual violence in order to advance theorizing on wartime rape from a masculinities perspective (Sjoberg 2016).

Deriving from these contextual, conceptual and analytical premises, Chapter 7 constitutes the first step of shifting the focus back towards questions of justice in response to sexual violence against men. Chapters 7 and 8 consequently examine what justice means for male survivors, which processes can facilitate justice for male sexual violence victims and to what extent and how existing transitional justice processes take into account and respond to male sexual and gendered harms. Across these two chapters, I evidence that in Northern Uganda, as indeed elsewhere globally, a vacuum of gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice for male-directed sexual violence prevails. I also argue that for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda, justice is a social project (Baines 2010) and a process (Hamber 2009), rather than an event. The discussion in these two chapters constitutes the first ever empirically-guided analysis of male survivors' viewpoints on justice in a post-conflict setting.

In Chapter 7, I demonstrate how this process of justice commences with survivors' participation in support groups. The vast majority of Acholi male survivors attested that for them, "justice means to be in a group with other survivors" (*Field notes*, 27 May 2015). My analysis foregrounds that survivors' groups contribute to justice in four fundamental ways: (1) by enabling survivors to re-negotiate their gender identities; (2) by mitigating isolation through the (re-)building of relationships; (3) by offering safe spaces and enabling survivors to exercise agency; and (4) by initiating a process of recognition of male survivors' gendered harms. In this reading, groups

constitute a pathway through which survivors can attain a sense of justice on the micro-level. Groups, however, constitute only one piece of a larger puzzle of justice, from which further needs and priorities at the macro-level can emerge.

If survivors' groups constitute only one component to this process, then which additional measures are required to deliver holistic justice for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda? This empirical question is taken up in Chapter 8, which further deepens an understanding of how male survivors of sexual violence conceptualize justice and to what extent and how transitional justice processes in Northern Uganda address male sexual and gendered harms. The analysis reveals that Acholi male survivors primarily referred to government acknowledgement, prosecutions and reparations - primarily in the form of material compensation and physical rehabilitation - as predominant justice-related concerns. Survivors' viewpoints on these measures, however, are characterized by a diversity of, at times, competing views. I similarly show that the prospects of attaining justice through these measures in the current gendered societal, cultural and political climate in Uganda are low. Overall, the findings presented in Chapter 8 significantly advance an understanding of how to deliver justice for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda, a sub-category of victims situated at the peripheries of on-going justice debates, henceforth having implications for transitional justice research and practice. In combination, Chapters 7 and 8 accentuate the centrality of acknowledgement and recognition for male survivors' marginalized and silenced sexual and gendered harms and experiences, to be obtained through a variety of mechanisms and processes.

In Chapter 9, I conclude the dissertation by summarizing my findings and main arguments. I also revisit dominating arguments about transitional justice through a masculinities lens and predominant assumptions about conflict-related sexual violence. The findings I present and the arguments I make throughout this dissertation advance and contribute to both of these areas of study. By way of pulling my main findings and primary contributions into one concluding analytical framework, I conceptualize a broadened and thickened conceptualization of transitional justice through a masculinities lens that is gender-inclusive and responsive to male sexual and gendered harms.



## **Chapter 2: The Research Process - Methodological and Ethical Reflections**

### **2.1. Introduction**

When conducting ethically sensitive research in (post-)conflict settings, and in particular when engaging populations in vulnerable situations, such as (male) survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, careful and transparent methodological and ethical reflections are of utmost importance (Wood 2013; Sriram, King et al. 2009).<sup>18</sup> This chapter therefore sets out the research process of this study. I provide the methodological context of the dissertation and outline the research design rationale, as well as the data collection and analysis processes. Due to the sensitivity of researching sexual violence in a (post-)conflict environment, specific attention is paid to the ethical considerations underpinning the research (Smyth and Robinson 2001; WHO 2007).<sup>19</sup>

As I examine what justice means for male survivors (see Chapter 1.5), this study not only constitutes an academic inquiry but also an engaging process that seeks to have an impact for survivors (Lundy and McGovern 2006). Inspired by Robin's (2011) participatory and engaged research methodology, my study thus aims to be emancipatory and empowering. In particular, my findings intend to provide tools and resources around which male survivors and the associations they form, as well as the organizations that work with them, can mobilize and advocate, thereby fostering victims' agency (*ibid.*).

### **2.2. Research Design**

In this section, I describe the dissertation's research design. I provide a methodological justification for the inductive methodology and the grounded theory approach underpinning this study, and offer a rationale for selecting Northern Uganda as an in-depth case study.

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<sup>18</sup> Ethical approval has been obtained from: Ulster University Research Ethics Committee (REC/15/0112), Gulu University Research Ethics Committee (GUREC/33/05/2016), and the Ugandan National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) (SS4021).

<sup>19</sup> Rather than including a separate section on research ethics, careful ethical considerations and reflections are highlighted throughout the entire chapter.

### **2.2.1. Inductive Methodology and Grounded Theory**

Within the social sciences in general, it is relatively common to systematically test previously developed theories in a deductive approach (Nilsson 2008: 45). This is typically done via the deduction of testable hypotheses deriving from one single theory or from a combination of different theories, applied to a number of cases or tested by the utilization of empirical findings (George and Bennett 2004). As surveyed more carefully in the following chapter, however, existing scholarship on conflict-related sexual violence against men, and in particular its nexus with transitional justice, is largely descriptive (e.g. Johnson et al. 2008, 2010) and heavily under-theorized (see Touquet and Gorris 2016). Consequentially, sustained theories and concrete testable hypotheses specifically regarding transitional justice in response to conflict-related sexual violence against men are severely limited. A deductive theory-testing research design is therefore not appropriate. Nilsson (2008) argues that if "there are no identifiable theories at hand" (45), theory building or development is necessary, in order to "identify causal paths and variables relevant to give an outcome" (George and Bennett 2004: 262). Towards this end, this thesis aims to address this gap by generating and further developing theoretical understanding about justice in response to sexual violence against men (see Chapters 4, 7, 8), and about the dynamics of male-directed gendered violence (see Chapter 6). By drawing from newly generated empirical data, this thesis therefore follows an inductive methodological process (Thorne 2000).

In employing this inductive approach, however, my aim throughout this thesis is not to follow a purely a-theoretical approach, and so my arguments are ultimately based upon, informed by and modeled around various overarching and layered theoretical concepts and claims. My aim is also not to develop one particular theory (or set of theories) with concrete hypotheses that should then subsequently be tested against other empirical cases and taken up by other scholars. Rather, I aim to inductively develop an overall empirically-guided yet theoretical understanding of the intersections between conflict-related sexual violence against men and transitional justice, including survivors' experiences. In particular, by re-visioning existing theoretical work on gender justice through a masculinities lens (see Chapter 4), I seek to build upon and further develop theories on gender and transitional justice. Furthermore, the scrutinizing and development of the conceptual framework

'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Chapter 6) constitutes another concrete example of the theoretical outcome and contributions I provide.

As I seek to develop theory, this study is thus inductively guided. The research design specifically contains various elements of grounded theory (Creswell 2012) as a qualitative research method, although not fully and strictly adhering to it. In general, "the intent of a grounded theory study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory" (*ibid.*: 63). Creswell (2012) explains that theory-development is "generated or '*grounded*' in data from participants who have experienced the process" (*ibid.*). In a grounded theory research design, empirical data are inductively applied to enhance theoretical understanding. According to Creswell (2012), "grounded theory is a good design to use when a theory is not available to explain a process. The literature may have models available, but they were developed and tested on samples and populations other than those of interest [...]" (66). Therefore, grounded theory is a qualitative research process that aims to generate theoretical explanations and understanding, influenced and shaped empirically by the views of research participants (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Applied to the context of this study, the justification for grounded theory as an appropriate research design reflects the current scope of the under-theorized literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men in general, and with regards to transitional justice in particular (see Chapter 1.3). The data for conducting grounded theory research usually derive from interviews or focus group discussions, although other types of data, such as ethnographic participant observation and field notes, contribute to informing the research (Creswell 2012), as per the methodological approach of this dissertation.

My research design, however, merely borrows from and only contains different methodological elements of a grounded theory approach, rather than strictly adhering to it. For instance, Charmaz (2005), who conceptualizes grounded theory from a social constructivist perspective, foresees that grounded theorists "conduct the literature review after developing an independent analysis" (6) and hence exclusively following the fieldwork, similar to some ethnographic research. In this study, however, the relevant literature was systematically reviewed prior to, subsequent to as well as during the extended fieldwork period, to facilitate an informed and guided data collection period and to enable a constant conversation between theories and

data. Table 1 shows to what extent and how grounded theory as a methodological research design is applied and modified in this thesis.

**Table 1: Grounded Theory as applied in this thesis**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Grounded Theory</b>	<b>Methodological Application</b>
<b>Focus</b>	Developing a theory grounded in data from the field	Developing an empirically-guided theoretical understanding on justice for male sexual violence survivors
<b>Type of Problem Suited for Design</b>	Best Grounding a theory in the views of participants	Theoretical knowledge to be grounded in male survivors' views/perspectives
<b>Discipline Background</b>	<b>and</b> Drawing from sociology	Gender studies and feminist theorizing, conflict studies, socio-legal research, legal anthropology
<b>Unit of Analysis</b>	Studying a process, action, or interaction involving many individuals	Studying the <i>process</i> of how sexual harm and suffering influence perspectives on post-conflict justice among survivors
<b>Data Collection Forms</b>	Using primarily interviews with 20-60 individuals; field-notes	46 respondents in workshop discussions; 79 key-informant interviews; focus group discussions (FGDs); participant reflection and field-notes
<b>Data Analysis Strategies</b>	Analyzing data through open coding, axial coding, selective coding	Analyzing data through thematic coding (using Nvivo)
<b>Written Report</b>	Generating a theory	Generating theoretical understanding on the nexus between transitional justice and sexual violence against men

(adopted and modified from: Creswell 2012: 78-79).

### 2.2.2. Rationale for Case Study Selection

The focus on one in-depth case study, based upon extensive and richly textured qualitative field research, facilitates a holistic and grounded examination of the

dynamics of sexual violence and transitional justice within a particular case. The in-depth case study design furthermore allows me to foreground the viewpoints of male survivors, following an ontology from below (Robins 2011). Conducting a single case study analysis on Northern Uganda thus allows for what Geertz (1983) labels in anthropological terms as 'thick descriptions'. Although the concentration on one case study implies compromises with regards to the findings' representation across other case sites, key implications of my data and arguments from Northern Uganda can nevertheless be expected to transfer and translate across other conflict contexts as well, in that they imply broader empirical and conceptual generalizability.<sup>20</sup> In particular, my analysis of transitional justice in response to sexual violence against men through a masculinities lens is centered around theorizing at the mezzo-level, with utility to other empirical contexts and cases (see Chapter 4).

A variety of different methodological and ethical criteria as well as feasibility and practicality aspects influenced the focus on Northern Uganda as a case study. In particular, my previous experience of conducting research in (and on) Northern Uganda since 2011 has led me to continue working in this context and has facilitated the research. My selection of Northern Uganda as a case thus constitutes an ideographic approach to knowledge (Zahar 2009: 192), generally characterized as "particular cases chosen because of some affinity between the researcher and their subject" (*ibid.*). According to Zahar, such approaches to research are said "to result in detailed, context-sensitive research that captures specificity and provides rich and thick descriptions" (*ibid.*). While a thorough contextualization of the Northern Ugandan conflict is offered in Chapter 5, here I briefly outline the contextual and methodological rationale determining the case study selection.

### ***Methodological Considerations***

Northern Uganda is among a long list of places that experienced conflict in which sexual violence against men occurred (Bastick et al. 2007; see Chapter 3) and for which at least initial documented accounts exist (Dolan 2009; Esuruku 2012; see

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<sup>20</sup> For instance, the investigation of the irresponsiveness of transitional justice processes to male sexual harms in general (e.g. Chapter 4) carries implications for other conflict contexts. Likewise, my problematization of the language and conceptualization of 'emasculatation' and 'feminization' in relation to theorizing sexual violence against men, and my proposition of the utilization of the frame 'displacement from gendered personhood' (Chapter 6.5) likewise travel from Northern Uganda to other contexts.

Chapter 5). During the early years (1986 - early 1990s) of the more than two decades of conflict between the LRA and the Government of Uganda, soldiers of the government's army perpetrated widespread acts of sexual violence against the (female and male) Acholi civilian population (see Chapter 5). Crimes of sexual violence against men, however, remain absent and marginalized from dominant analyses of the conflict, therefore constituting an immediate research gap which this dissertation seeks to remedy.

In addition to the widespread and large-scale occurrence of sexual violence against men, Northern Uganda also constitutes an interesting and exemplary case of a relatively diverse transitional justice laboratory, which includes numerous implemented and proposed mechanisms (Okello, Dolan et al. 2012). As reviewed in more detail elsewhere in this dissertation (see Chapter 5.5), the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) is developing a draft transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014), involving national prosecutions by the International Crimes Division (ICD) (McDonald and Porter 2016), proposals for a reparations framework and a truth-telling process (JLOS 2014: 4) and consideration for traditional justice processes. This policy, however, has yet to be legislated and implemented. The International Criminal Court (ICC) also investigates the situation in Northern Uganda and has commenced a case against former LRA commander Dominic Ongwen (Ogora 2016). On the local level, various grassroots memorialization initiatives (Hopwood 2011) and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms (Baines 2007; Quinn 2007) are utilized as localized attempts of transitional justice (Shaw and Waldorf 2010).<sup>21</sup> Northern Uganda therefore constitutes a poignant case combining the occurrence of widespread sexual violence against men with concrete proposals for a diverse transitional justice landscape as the two primary areas of study, therefore enabling the comprehensive examination of the research questions and the overall rationale driving this study (see Chapter 1.4.).

### ***Personal Considerations and Feasibility Aspects***

In addition to these substantive methodological considerations, practicality and feasibility aspects likewise informed the case selection. Basic knowledge of the local

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<sup>21</sup> At the same time, however, and despite the existence of these numerous proposed and existing transitional justice mechanisms, Northern Uganda cannot rigorously be described as a transitioning society, because the Juba Peace Agreement between the Ugandan Government and the LRA was not fully signed, and there was no regime change at the national level (see Chapter 5.5).

language Acholi in addition to well-established contacts throughout Northern Uganda facilitated the research process and enabled me to undertake research in greater depth than in any other potential setting. Having previously worked in Gulu with the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) between 2011 and 2012, and maintaining prior relationships with the Refugee Law Project (RLP), both local organizations working on issues concerning transitional justice and gender, helped immensely to facilitate the research and data collection process. In particular, RLP's network of male sexual violence survivors' groups, to be elaborated in more detail further below, constituted yet another crucial enabling factor in conducting the research with male survivors in an ethically sensitive and inclusive manner (see Dolan, Edström et al. 2016). Later parts of this chapter reflect more carefully upon the cooperation with RLP in conducting the research (see Chapter 2.4.1).

It was also during my prior engagement in Northern Uganda in late 2011 that I first learned about the occurrence and dynamics of sexual violence against men in this context. Together with a colleague, we interviewed representatives of various survivors' associations. During one of those interviews in Kitgum district, after diligently having answered our questions, the leader of a massacre survivors' group continued to narrate to us the manifold ways in which his community had been affected by various episodes of violence and brutality not only by the LRA but also by the government soldiers. What appeared to be most memorable and noteworthy to him was a particularly gruesome and brutal act of sexual torture of a male community member by the NRA in the early 1990s, which he graphically recounted. I had previously read as many books and articles about the conflict as I possibly could and had conducted many interviews in Acholiland for the past four months, and so I thought that I roughly knew about the various forms of violence perpetrated during the conflict. Up to that point, however, I had not yet heard anything about sexual crimes perpetrated against men within the context of the conflict. Later in the car, on our way back to Kitgum town, I asked my colleagues whether this instance of male-directed sexual violence constituted an isolated case; "it was widespread and happened a lot, but people do not talk about it at all" my colleagues explained to me. "That is why you and most people have never heard about it", I was told.

Since then, I have been intellectually and personally interested in the dynamics of these crimes and in male survivors' experiences. Why did these crimes occur? Why

are they seldom discussed locally? What characterizes the lived realities of male survivors? How do survivors experience the silencing of their harms for more than twenty years, and how do they want these crimes to be redressed? Out of those deliberations and over time grew not only my academic but also my personal interest, which underpins the inquiry of this study.

### **2.2.3. Reflexivity and Positionalities during the Research Process**

As a young, white, European academic, I am obviously an outsider, if not even a stranger to Acholiland and thus to most of my respondents. A *munu*, as the Acholi say. In many ways, I could not be any more different from the elderly Acholi survivors I engaged with for this study. At times, our gender identities were the only obvious and visible common personal characteristics, and yet, we seemed to have much more in common than initially appeared. My sexual and gender identity as a heterosexual man in particular constituted a crucial enabling factor in me conducting the research, confirming previous claims that the gender identity of the researcher matters when conducting research on sexual violence (see Schwalbe and Wolkomir 2001; Pini and Pease 2013). I believe that as a heterosexual man, I have been able to relate in a variety of different ways not only with my male colleagues at RLP (and thus with some of my key-informants) but also with the male survivors who participated in the workshop discussions. I believe that especially our conversations about the physiological impact of the sexual violation on male survivors' sexualities during the workshops were made possible because of my own positionality.

My external appearance and my looks in many ways resemble those of the countless expatriate aid workers, students, Christian missionaries or travelers and tourists who populate Gulu (also see Finnström 2008).<sup>22</sup> To the best of my abilities, I always attempted to distance myself from assumptions and expectations related to this status, and to transcend the obvious differences and boundaries between myself and my interlocutors. I tried to learn the local language Acholi as best as I could, although my inability to have a fluent professional conversation should be acknowledged as a methodological limitation.<sup>23</sup> I also tried to participate in my

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<sup>22</sup> Especially so in the summer months of June, July and August, when north American and European students embark on internships, fieldwork and the like. I borrow from my local friends in calling these months the 'mzungu [Swahili for foreigner] season'.

<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, my basic understanding of Acholi allowed me to have very basic and short conversations. This has enabled me to better relate with my colleagues at RLP and my informants; to



informants' lives as much as I could; I attended funerals, weddings, graduation parties and traditional ceremonies. I also spent countless afternoons or evenings in local bars or at the kiosk around the corner from my house, to participate in everyday activities and tasks and learn as much about culture, sociality and gender identities and relations as I could.

When travelling to the field, when and where possible, I also made a purposeful and methodologically-informed choice of travelling by motor-bike - locally referred to as *boda-boda* - rather than by car, to visibly distance myself from other expatriate aid-workers travelling in air-conditioned 4x4 wheel SUVs (see Ryan 2017). I believe that travelling by locally common modes of transportation contributed (albeit of course only on a small-scale) to transcend some of the economic, cultural, societal and political barriers between the groups of informants and me. I thus concur with Ryan (2017), who, reflecting on her own field research in Sierra Leone, articulates that "turning up on the same mode of transport frequently used to travel to markets, or to health centers, or to visit relatives made me more relatable to the communities I visited" (2).

During one of our numerous trips to the field, a group of villagers gave me a new Acholi name: *Omara* - the loved one, or the one who loves, I was told; because my appreciation for Acholi culture and Acholi ways of life was so obvious to the people in the village, they explained to me. Some of my friends and colleagues at times called me, perhaps jokingly, Acholi *munu*. I am sure this is nothing unique, and yet it meant a great deal to me; indeed these were among the experiences where conducting this empirically-heavy research just felt like the exact right thing to do (also see Finnström 2003).

Despite these attempts and despite my participatory research design aimed at decolonizing the relationship between researcher and researched (Speed 2006; see further below), of course significant power differences persisted (Wood 2013). I thus recognize that my own positionality as a young, white German aspiring academic based at a UK institution influences not only my relationship to research participants but also the research process at large, and the way I am perceived by others in the field. Inspired by Baines (2016), I am also mindful of the critique that outside,

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indicate and show my appreciation of local culture, customs and traditions; and to better contextualize various findings.

Western scholars, such as myself, "will always be self-limited in their ability to listen to and write outside the yoke of colonialism" (28).

### ***Re-Conceptualizing the Research Relationship: Recognizing Informants' Multiple Positionalities***

In this sub-section, I briefly reflect upon the relationships between researchers and research participants. Drawing upon personal fieldwork experiences and specifically reflecting upon a specific situation of post-conflict insecurity in which my key-informants guaranteed my physical safety, I seek to recognize respondents' multiple positionalities during research in (post-)conflict zones and thereby re-conceptualize the ways in which research relationships are conventionally portrayed.

Numerous guidelines for research ethics (WHO 2007) outline the methodological and ethical principle of 'do no harm' (see Wood 2006a) while emphasizing the researcher's responsibilities to ensure the protection, safety and well-being of respondents. Through a variety of different measures and approaches, outlined in this chapter, I have attempted to fulfill these methodological requirements in manifold ways and to the best of my abilities. At the same time, however, I emphasize that these relationships between researchers and informants are not necessarily always uni-directional, where the researcher exclusively controls or exercises power over the informants (Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay 2016). This requires us to reflexively reassess the research relationship (Thapar-Björkert and Henry 2004) and the various positionalities embodied by researchers and researched alike. I argue that some of the presumptions underpinning research ethics guidelines (e.g. WHO 2007), while undoubtedly having good intentions, are based upon essentialist portrayals of research participants and neo-colonial assumptions regarding the research relationship: informants are presumed to be inevitably vulnerable and in need of external white (and masculine) protection (see Oakley 1981; England 1994), while (external) researchers are positioned and position themselves to be in control of passive research subjects and the entire research process more broadly (Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay 2016: 1012). The researcher is therefore masculinized, informants often feminized.

In contesting the assumption that research participants exclusively occupy the 'oppressed victimhood' axis of identity, Thapar-Björkert and Henry (2004) instead

emphasize that informants exercise power in different ways (363), thereby re-conceptualizing binary constructions of the researched as powerless and the researcher as powerful (364). The authors argue, "the research space can be seen as one of complex power relations where power is put into play by a number of actors" (*ibid.*: 365). Malejacq and Mukhopadhyay (2016), while reflecting on power and partiality during research in warzones, consequentially urge scholars that "the 'curtain' shielding fieldwork from greater scrutiny must be pulled back for a more honest conversation about the challenges involved in pursuing this brand of scholarship [in (post-)conflict zones] today" (1012).

By reflecting upon some of my own experiences of the research relationship, I seek to do precisely that. I similarly add to this emerging critique by highlighting the need to reassess and re-conceptualize how these relations are perceived and portrayed. I illustrate how in addition to my working diligently to ensure my respondents' protection, my key-informants and main interlocutors similarly exercised agency and control over me, amongst others by reassuring my physical and psychological well-being. A particularly illustrative and poignant example refers to a situation towards the end of my fieldwork period, in mid-June 2016. I enjoyed my Sunday evening in a local bar watching football, when the central police station in town was attacked. Caught in-between the exchange of gunfire between the police and a newly formed rebel group, I was trapped inside the walled and gated bar compound for about four hours. Various key-informants made sure to call, to follow-up on me and to ensure that I was safe. Once the gunfire had ceased and the situation had calmed, at about 1 AM in the morning, one of my main interlocutors, who in the meantime had become a close friend, came to pick me up and to take me home safely.

Illustrated through this scenario, the research participants and informants in this study thus occupied multiple positionalities, evidencing that the research relationship is contextually and circumstantially dependent as well as never static but "shifts and fluctuates depending on the different constellations of identity and power at play" (Thapar-Björkert and Henry 2004: 371). Thapar-Björkert and Henry (2004) consequentially emphasize that "the researched are not only and always in a subordinate position in relation to the researcher" (373) - as most commonly portrayed by the majority of ethics guidelines - "but can negotiate and challenge conventional and uni-directional axis of power" (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, especially my colleagues at RLP, both in Gulu and Kampala, also helped me to deal with various psychological and emotional effects I faced while conducting this highly sensitive and emotional research. Often simply talking about and collectively making sense of the different stories and narratives we were exposed to (as discussed in more detail further below) proved immensely effective in navigating the psychological impact that sensitive research can have on the researcher (Mertus 2009; Sriram et al. 2009).

### **2.3. Towards Participatory Action Research?**

Before discussing the numerous data collection techniques utilized by the study, in this section I reflect upon the participatory approach employed throughout this thesis. This approach intended to constitute an empowering and emancipatory research environment and a "shift of the locus of power from the researcher towards the researched" (Robins 2011: 135).

While the study does not strictly fulfill the methodological principles of participatory action research (PAR) as a specific research design, I am nevertheless guided and inspired by its underlying principles and ideals (see Robins 2011; Lundy and McGovern 2006), especially as I conducted the workshop discussions with male survivors, as further elaborated below. In their implementation of a participatory research project, Lundy and McGovern (2006) explain that "action research methods are framed by a commitment to social justice, giving voice to those who are usually silenced, challenging structures of oppressing and acting with ordinary people to bring about social change [...]" (51). This reflects the goal of this thesis and of my own approaches and ideals in conducting research. The key principles of action research include community participation, local ownership, and local control (Lundy and McGovern 2006: 51). PAR thus aims to shift the locus of power from the researcher towards the researched (Robins and Wilson 2015). According to Robins and Wilson (2015), "participatory research focuses on a process of sequential reflection and action, carried out with and by local people rather than on them. Local knowledge and perspectives are not only acknowledged but form the basis for research and planning" (226).

In seeking to understand what 'justice' means from the perspectives of male survivors themselves and aiming to contrast localized conceptions with prescribed top-down

approaches of transitional justice, my research is intended as "an exercise in knowledge production on the terms of the researched" (Robins 2011: 137). To contribute to 'evidence-based transitional justice' the active participation of the community subjected to research and study constitutes an essential pre-condition (Pham and Vinck 2007; van der Merwe et al. 2009). Robins (2011) further argues that community participation is important both to "challenge international prescriptive tendencies and to ensure that voices from the grassroots are heard" (136), both of which drive the rationale behind my study. While nevertheless unequal power relations between the research participants and myself persist and while ethical dilemmas remain, the research process adopted throughout this thesis nevertheless intends to serve victims on their own terms (*ibid.*: 137), while aiming to decolonize (Speed 2006) the relationship between researched and researcher as much as possible. Towards this end, Robins (2011), Lundy and McGovern (2006) and others (see Pham and Vinck 2007; Robins and Wilson 2015) argue that a participatory approach is needed.

Below I describe in more detail how my affiliation with RLP and the participatory and flexible conduct of the workshop discussions with male survivors fostered a process of conducting research *with* local people, rather than on them. My emphasis on survivors' perspectives on justice similarly constitutes the basis for my arguments throughout this thesis, following a participatory and emancipatory approach (Robins 2011). Within the context of PAR, the researcher's role is also facilitative, to provide advice and expertise as required (Robins and Wilson 2015: 230). In particular, the design of the workshop discussions with survivors, in which my colleagues and I merely provided a few guiding questions and thus let the discussions unfold, was guided by such a facilitative approach (Robins 2011).<sup>24</sup>

In addition to these methodological guiding principles, PAR is similarly characterized by specific normative criteria, particularly in that it "rejects the liberal value of neutrality in social research and aims to advance the goal of a particular community [...]" (Robins and Wilson 2015: 228). Lundy and McGovern (2006) likewise emphasize that "action research rejects the position that research should be objective and value-free, and that researchers should remain detached and neutral. It is an overtly political paradigm that engages researchers on equal terms with

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<sup>24</sup> For a more detailed exploration of the workshop discussions, see Chapter 2.4.2.

marginalized groups, in a collaborative initiative to bring about social justice and social change" (51).

Maintaining neutrality or value-free engagement within the context of sensitive research with populations in marginalized, victimized and vulnerable situations in general often does not only seem impossible, but at times even undesirable (see Behar 1996; Zahar 2009). The careful reader will notice that remaining entirely neutral or value-free in light of the heart-breaking stories and experiences of male survivors was not something I managed, nor something I, in full honesty, truly aspired to (see Tickner 2005). Rather than staying entirely value-free, my normative aim here is to foreground and elucidate the harmful experiences of heavily marginalized and victimized male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda. The study's guiding normative principles of foregrounding survivors' lived realities and their perspectives on justice therefore constitute a value-driven and non-neutral approach (see Behar 1996; England 1994; Oakley 1981).

While the research design employed throughout this thesis thus aligns with the methodological principles of PAR in a variety of ways, my methodological approach nevertheless also differs from PAR in various substantive ways. In PAR, community members become fully involved in the study's control and decision-making process, and "local stakeholders need to be fully involved in the initiation, design and decision-making of the project" (Lundy and McGovern 2006: 52). Robins and Wilson (2015) emphasize that the "identification of the goals and the nature of the PAR is a joint project of the community and the researcher", and that researched communities "must determine the goals and methods [...]" (230). In my research, however, the goals and research questions of the study were identified beforehand, and not in a full democratic and collaborative process with survivors' communities.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, I proposed the research design and the data collection techniques, which were then refined in collaboration with RLP and approved by representatives of the survivors' groups. While my study thus aims to be as participatory as possible, it does not fully qualify as PAR to the extent that research conducted by Robins (2011) or Lundy and McGovern (2006) does.

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<sup>25</sup> Following discussions with RLP during my preliminary visit to the field in May 2015, however, I refined the research question, and thus worked collaboratively with RLP. Nevertheless, the process was heavily determined by me.

I argue, however, that particularly within the framework of a postgraduate research project, fully adhering to the principles of participatory action research proves difficult for a variety of reasons. First, the limited time frame of a three-year period and financial constraints install practical barriers towards a collaborative process of consistently designing, conducting and writing the study in collaboration with victims' communities. Robins and Wilson (2015) likewise argue that in practical terms, the dearth of funding for PAR studies represents a challenge to the emergence of PAR in transitional justice scholarship. Similar, the institutional checks and balances of many social science graduate schools, including for instance 100-day or 'first year' vivas, often demand that the goals, aims and objectives of the study as well as the proposed research design are rigorously identified and defined prior to the actual field research and data collection period. Institutional research ethics committees (RECs) likewise demand clearly identified research questions, goals, objectives, and research designs before granting ethical approval and thus before enabling the engagement with victim communities in the first place.

Nevertheless, despite these constraints and besides the distinctions between my study and holistic PAR, I remain inspired and guided by a participatory approach and by a commitment to "ground knowledge production in the everyday lives of those most affected" (Robins and Wilson 2015: 236). This study therefore constitutes a sustained effort of actively engaging with male survivors of sexual violence as participants in the research in an ethnographic sense.

## **2.4. Data Collection**

In this sub-chapter I introduce the numerous and triangulated data collection techniques utilized throughout this dissertation.

The findings underpinning this study specifically draw from seven months of empirical field research between January and July 2016. Prior to the data collection, in May 2015 I spent a preparatory month in Northern Uganda, to re-assess and validate the previously identified research gaps, to refine the proposed research questions in collaboration with local partners and to maintain prior contacts with key-informants and local organizations. For the field research and data collection period between January and July 2016, I was affiliated as a research associate with the Refugee Law Project. This affiliation enabled me to become part of an

established and sustainable process of conducting research on sexual violence against men and working with male survivors, thus allowing for an informed, emancipatory and empowering research process.

The data collection was also made possible through the diligent and thorough assistance of my translator and research collaborator, Kenneth Oyet Odong, who joined the process in April 2016.<sup>26</sup> As I spent the majority of time between January and March familiarizing myself with RLP's work and with the survivors' associations, I only began working with Kenneth in April 2016, when the frequency of additional key-informant interviews and focus group discussions increased. Kenneth helped with some key-informant interviews and the focus group discussions and provided important input for parts of the analysis. His grounded understanding of Acholi culture as well as his insider account<sup>27</sup> of the conflict proved invaluable in aiding my contextual understanding.

Overall, the data derive from a myriad of different triangulated data-collection techniques, including: four participatory workshop discussions with a total of 46 male survivors of sexual violence who are members of survivor support groups; 79 in-depth key-informant interviews; two focus group discussions (FGDs) with 11 male elders; and ethnographic participant 'reflection'.<sup>28</sup> My analysis is therefore based upon the viewpoints and perspectives of a total of 136 respondents, all of whom have provided informed oral or written consent (Crow et al. 2006).<sup>29</sup> The utilization of these diverse data collection techniques similarly allowed for data triangulation in order to enhance and ensure validity (see George and Bennett 2004). Each of these specific data collection techniques is discussed below.

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<sup>26</sup> I met Kenneth through another researcher. Prior to April 2016, I met with several research assistants, all of who have expertise in conducting research and working with researchers in Northern Uganda over a prolonged period of time. When explaining to them my research, however, a number of them equated my focus on sexual violence against men with homosexuality. Obviously, these meetings did not result in more sustained research collaborations.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth himself was abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and was forced to spend more than six months with the rebels.

<sup>28</sup> See Section 2.4.5 for an explanation of the use of participant 'reflection', rather than the more commonly adopted participant 'observation' (see Finnström 2008).

<sup>29</sup> To obtain informed consent, an information sheet and an informed consent form were used in English and in Acholi language. Copies of these documents can be found in the appendix.



### **2.4.1. Joining an Established Process - The Institutional Affiliation with RLP**

During the research period, I was affiliated as a research associate with the Refugee Law Project (RLP), an outreach project of the School of Law of Makerere University in Uganda.<sup>30</sup> Throughout the entire data collection period, between January and July 2016, I was based in the organization's Gulu office and closely worked with local staff. Cooperating and being affiliated with RLP allowed me to join and become part of an established process of working and engaging in a participatory approach with male survivors of sexual violence who are members of institutionalized survivors' groups (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016). This also enabled me to work closely and partner with local experts on the topic of sexual violence against men.

For the past years, RLP has engaged with male survivors of sexual violence in an inclusive, empowering and ethically sensitive way (Dolan, Shahrokh et al. 2017). Specifically, RLP is working with three institutionalized and organized victims' groups and associations, composed of male survivors of sexual violence (RLP 2014a; Edström, Dolan et al. 2016). One of these groups is specifically composed of Acholi male survivors of sexual violence and based in Northern Uganda. The *Men of Courage* umbrella association is specifically composed of three sub-groups located in three separate locations across Acholiland. All findings directly focused on male survivors' experiences and perspectives derive from workshop discussions with voluntarily participating members of these groups (see Chapter 2.4.2). A detailed overview of the background, activities and challenges of these groups follows in Chapter 7.

The collaboration with RLP and the joining of an established process of engagement was instrumental not only in gaining physical access to male survivors but also in developing mutual trust, between me and my collaborators at RLP, as well as between me and the research participants, who are members of the survivors' groups. Norman (2009) emphasizes that trust must be developed over time and sequentially. Due to their prolonged and sustained engagement with male survivors of sexual violence, RLP certainly has been able to establish a level of mutual trust between the

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<sup>30</sup> The Refugee Law Project has an institutionalized research associate scheme and regularly hosts researchers. This affiliation is financially tied to a monetary fee or contribution, which covers emerging costs for the institution and enables local Ugandan or Uganda-based researchers and students to also conduct research.

organization and its staff and the groups of survivors. A recent study about the cooperation between RLP, the Institute for Development Studies as well as the *Men of Hope Refugee Association Uganda* (MOHRU) of male survivors refers to this continuous process and cooperation as 'engaged excellence', "meaning that the [...] work is dependent upon it linking to and involving those who are at the heart of the change they wish to see" (Dolan, Edström et al. 2016: 37).

By becoming an integral component of this process, some of the trust the survivors have in the institution (and its staff) was transferred to me as an affiliated researcher. During the workshops, various survivors emphasized that they felt reassured and comfortable to participate in the discussion specifically because the workshops were conducted in cooperation with RLP and accompanied by RLP staff with whom the survivors engaged with over a prolonged period.<sup>31</sup> To further build and maintain trust, we also regularly engaged with representatives and members of the group on an informal basis prior to each of the workshops we conducted, to ensure that the survivors who participated in a workshop discussion had an opportunity to meet me in advance.

The cooperation and affiliation with RLP also allowed me to conduct the workshop discussions with male survivors in the presence of experts in the field, which was instrumental in addressing some of the arising ethical considerations. Pam Bell (2001) suggests that interviews in particular and research in general should be made in the company of peers, and that post-interview support should be provided. In particular, one of my RLP colleagues is a trained psychological counselor who regularly provides counseling sessions to conflict-affected communities in Northern Uganda, including male sexual violence survivors.<sup>32</sup> By joining the workshops, he was available and able to provide immediate psychological and psycho-social service to respondents in case it would have been necessary. The World Health

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<sup>31</sup> However, not only the institutional affiliation but rather my overall engagement with male survivors generally was important to develop, facilitate and foster these levels of mutual trust. For instance, prior to the data collection period, I met the chairperson of the *Men of Courage* group during the Second South-South Institute (SSI) on sexual violence against men and boys in Cambodia in May 2015. I talked to him about my research and my intentions of conducting more in-depth empirical research in the coming year. When I first met him again on one of my first days in the field in Northern Uganda, he was visibly excited to see me and specifically stated that he viewed my prior engagement as a clear sign towards my commitment, which for him helped to establish a trustful relationship.

<sup>32</sup> This support is specifically offered as part of RLP's ongoing activities and in particular under their 'Beyond Juba Project (BJP) III', which offers physical and psychological support to victims of the conflict.

Organization's (WHO) guide on ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies (WHO 2007) specifically emphasizes the importance of the availability of basic services, including psycho-social support, when interviewing victims of sexual violence.<sup>33</sup>

Despite these substantial methodological and ethical aspects, my collaboration with RLP was also characterized by practical components. For instance, having a desk in the Gulu office enabled me to become part of the daily working routine, and the organizational and institutional infrastructure facilitated practical aspects such as travel to the field. At the same time, my cooperation with RLP was not a one-way street characterized by their support towards my research, but was rather based upon mutual collaboration. Especially in the early months of my affiliation with RLP, I regularly assisted and supported my colleagues' daily work-related activities, travelled to the field for consecutive days to implement RLP's programming and immersed myself into the organization's work.<sup>34</sup> Particularly at the beginning, I focused less on my own research and primarily on assisting RLP's work. The first two months were therefore predominantly used to familiarize myself with RLP's work and approach, to develop a relationship and give my colleagues a chance to familiarize themselves with me, and my research, methodological approaches and ethical integrity.

Actively participating in these activities not only helped me to build a relationship of trust with my colleagues, but also offered numerous invaluable insights into conflict-affected communities' broader lived realities, as well as their post-conflict challenges. This cooperation thus helped me to become part of RLP's established process of working with male sexual violence survivors, as well as to see and realize the impact that this work (and hopefully my research) can potentially have. Active participation also enabled me to see myself as part of a team and a process, rather than an outsider, which greatly influenced my cooperation with colleagues and the

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<sup>33</sup> It is often suggested that researchers carry with them information and contact details for service-providers that respondents can seek out in case it would be necessary. This, however, can be condescending and patronizing as well as impractical, especially if survivors live in rural areas far away from urban centers where most of these services are located. Therefore, having the potential psycho-social service-provider present during the workshops in an inclusive, facilitative and ethically sensitive capacity proved to be advantageous over other means.

<sup>34</sup> In addition to these routine work-related tasks and assignment, I was additionally involved in co-organizing the organizations' sixth Institute for African Transitional Justice (IATJ) between late May and early June 2016.

extent to which I valued their input. This collaboration also impacted my participatory and collaborative research approach, further confirming my previous commitment and motivation to conduct research *with* people, rather than *on* them (Cornwall and Jekwes 1995; Robins 2011), with my RLP colleagues as key informants and interlocutors but also with the survivors as part of the workshop discussions.

To me, these different levels of involvement in RLP's work were not just unique and fascinating opportunities to obtain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local context. Rather, they were my active part in a collaborative process, and thus constitute elements of me 'giving back' to a process I benefited from immensely; something which is of particular concern to scholarly discussions about conducting ethical research (see Wood 2006a).

#### **2.4.2. Workshop Discussions with Male Sexual Violence Survivors**

Male survivors' perspectives on transitional justice processes and their experiences of harm derive from four participatory workshop discussions with a total of 46 male survivors who are members of the survivors' groups. The workshops were held in collaboration with RLP.

The sampling strategy of exclusively including male survivors of sexual violence who are members of survivors' support groups is underpinned by various ethical considerations. Specifically, the *Men of Courage* umbrella-group has clearly defined political and societal agendas and follows a commitment to advocate for justice on behalf of male survivors (RLP 2014a: 6). Deriving from this premise, the voluntarily participating members within the group had an interest in partaking in the workshops on this theme. Moreover, the group's relationship with RLP, their integration in an existing support structure, and their role in a collaborative process fostered a research environment that could respond to some the ethical challenges of conducting research on this topic (see Wood 2006), as elaborated in the paragraphs below.

As mentioned above and as elaborated in more detail in Chapter 7, the *Men of Courage* association consists of three sub-groups in three separate locations in different districts across Acholiland. To preserve survivors' anonymity and confidentiality, the exact locations of these groups will not be revealed. One participatory workshop was conducted with each of these groups, in addition to a

final workshop, which brought together representatives from each of the three groups. For each of these workshops, only voluntarily participating members joined the discussion. Two of the workshops were conducted in the familiar locations where the groups usually conduct their meetings, which in both cases were members' homesteads (*Workshops 2, 3*).<sup>35</sup> Another workshop took place in a nearby school compound (during the school holidays). Members of the group chose this location as they deemed it safe for discussing their viewpoints without raising the communities' attention or suspicion (*Workshop 1*). The fourth workshop, which brought together representatives of all three organizations, was organized in RLP's office in Gulu. While some of the respondents in this fourth discussion had already participated in one of the previous three workshops, other participants had not yet been part of the prior workshops. On average, each of the group discussion lasted between two to four hours.<sup>36</sup>

Rather than following a more imposed and guided group interview or focus group discussion format, the approach to these workshops was less guided and confrontational, but rather more open and participatory. For the first three workshops, I posed one guiding question, of 'what does justice mean to you?'.<sup>37</sup> This facilitated a discussion among the research participants, as well as between them, my RLP colleagues and me. If necessary, clarification and/or follow-up questions were asked, some of which were prepared in advance and some of which arose contextually from the discussion. I therefore served in a facilitative capacity, rather than as the research director (see Robins 2011), while participants had full agency over the workshop process and the direction of the discussion. All four workshops were conducted in Acholi, and two RLP colleagues translated for me.<sup>38</sup> Due to the focus of the workshops on questions of justice, I did not include any direct questions about their harmful experiences of sexual violence directly. In each of the discussions, however, survivors themselves always situated their perspectives in

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<sup>35</sup> One of the discussions preceded the group's weekly meeting, which ensured that numerous members were already present and that survivors did not have to devote too much extra time of their usual daily routines for partaking in the research process.

<sup>36</sup> Participants in the workshop discussions were provided with refreshments (drinks) and their travel costs to the respective locations were reimbursed. For the fourth workshop in Gulu town, participants had their travel costs reimbursed and were also provided with breakfast and lunch, as the workshop lasted for a little more than four hours, and some participants had to travel vast distances.

<sup>37</sup> The approach of asking this particular question was previously discussed with RLP colleagues, and deemed as appropriate to initiate and guide the conversation.

<sup>38</sup> Having two colleagues present at the workshops to translate allowed for rigorously double-checking exact translation and interpretations of the viewpoint of survivors as articulated during the sessions.

relation to their respective harms, and openly spoke about their sexual violations. Various survivors expressed that "talking has really helped, and it was important to get this out" (*Workshop 2*). We therefore never interrupted these elaborations, but rather let survivors speak freely and then connected their input back to the focus of the discussions on justice.

At the start of the fourth workshop, I gave a presentation on the Ugandan government's draft transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014), to allow for a sufficiently informed discussion about contextual transitional justice developments and to frame the workshop discussion. In preparation for this workshop, together with my colleagues, I compiled a summary of the draft policy. The summary was translated into Acholi, as some workshop participants were not proficient in English, let alone familiar or comfortable with the very technical language of the policy document. Copies of the translation were provided to the participants. Following the presentation on the draft policy, we asked survivors at the workshop to position their views and perspectives on justice in relation to the draft policy and the proposed transitional justice mechanisms and measures. The discussion then followed a similar open structure comparable to the previous three workshop discussions and was directed by the same guiding question.

The fourth workshop was followed by a meeting for members and representatives of the groups to work towards the future development of the separate groups and the *Men of Courage* umbrella-association. Survivors determined this meeting and its content themselves. Approximately a month in advance of the last workshop, my RLP colleagues and I spoke to the group's chairperson to plan the fourth workshop and to determine to what extent and how the groups could benefit from getting together in one space. Based on previous deliberations within the group, a strategy meeting was determined as the right approach, and thus formed the focus of the latter part of the workshop. I therefore worked to foster a space for members and representatives of the groups to facilitate future development and organization of the group. During the meeting, members confirmed their commitment to further formalize the structure of the groups in order to officially register as an association at the local government level. Towards this end, a constitution was needed for the *Men of Courage* mother group. During this meeting, we began to work jointly on developing a constitution, which I together with representatives of the group and

colleagues at RLP continued working on after the workshop. Providing this space for the group also constituted an aspect of actively involving research participants into the process within a participatory manner, and it was part of my process of "return[ing] to the community something of real value, in forms determined by participants themselves" (Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman 2010: 234).<sup>39</sup>

Overall, various participants stated that the workshops were empowering and emancipatory. "I am glad you are giving us a chance for telling the truth and we shall use the information accordingly" (*Workshop 4*), one survivor proclaimed. Directly linked to the focus of the study, another survivor attested that this "research is also justice, because the truth will come out during research" (*Workshop 1*). In relation to such viewpoints and expectations specifically but also during the research more generally, I attempted to manage my informants' expectations with regards to the actual expected outcome of the study (see Wood 2006). I continuously emphasized that the research was for an academic study, and that I cannot promise that any of this will ensure that "the truth will come out" (*Workshop 1*), nor that survivors will immediately benefit from this.

### ***Sampling Limitations***

Only including male survivors of sexual violence who are members of institutionalized survivors' associations may imply methodological limitations for the representativeness of the findings. In particular, some of my arguments cannot necessarily be directly extended towards individual male survivors who are not part of these groups, but require further examination (see Chapter 9.5). Especially my examination of survivors' groups as a form of justice (Chapter 7) primarily applies to the study's population of male survivors who are members of support groups. Survivors who are not linked to institutionalized groups may potentially have differing perspectives on transitional justice compared to survivors in groups with clearly defined political and societal agendas and a commitment to advocate for justice (RLP 2014a). The argumentation and conceptual linkages between survivors' groups and justice, however, may well imply generalizability with regards to

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<sup>39</sup> In addition to this aspect of 'giving back' to those involved in the research process, the findings deriving from the workshops and as presented and discussed throughout this dissertation will also be summarized into policy briefs. These documents are intended as resources for the groups of male survivors to further advocate on their behalf, and will be made available in English and Acholi, to be published through RLP.

survivors' groups in the context of transitional justice processes more broadly, referring to diverse survivors' groups in Northern Uganda and in other contexts. My group-specific analysis and discussion thus nevertheless carry the potential for wider mezzo-level theorizing and utility.

These relative limitations, however, stand in contrast to the ethical considerations underpinning my sampling strategy, as elaborated above. Ultimately, I compromised valuing ethical sensitivity and integrity over enhanced representativeness. In spite of these ethical and methodological choices, the findings deriving from the survivors' groups constitute original empirical data that offer novel insight into survivors' experiences and their perspectives on transitional justice, therefore significantly contributing to debates about conflict-related sexual violence against men in general. At the same time, the chosen sampling approach can be expected to imply at least some degree of representation for the larger population of men who have been subjected to sexual violence throughout Northern Uganda. The fact that the groups are located in three distinct locations across Acholiland allows for wide geographical coverage. Furthermore, the dynamics surrounding sexual violence against men as experienced by members of the group are comparable to the lived realities of male survivors who are not affiliated with survivors' associations.

### **2.4.3. Key-Informant Interviews**

I additionally conducted 79 in-depth key-informant interviews. Respondents were recruited from my maintained network of informants, and were identified based upon their expertise on transitional justice developments and the dynamics of the Northern Ugandan conflict as well as their prior experience of working on sexual violence and with male survivors. The breadth and depth of respondents' backgrounds and expertise allowed for a representative<sup>40</sup> sample of key-informants and their views and perspectives on the two key areas of study in this study: conflict-related sexual violence against men and transitional justice developments in Northern Uganda. Whereas some interviews were electronically recorded, for other interviews I only took hand-written notes, depending on the informants' preferences and consent.

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<sup>40</sup> Representative in terms of expertise, location, but also in terms of gender, religion or political background.



These interviews were carried out to aid overall understanding of the conflict context, and to obtain primary data about sexual violence against men (and women), gender structures and identities, as well as local and national transitional justice developments. Respondents included cultural and religious leaders, local authorities, national policy-makers (primarily working in the justice sector), service providers working with male survivors of sexual violence as well as representatives of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) working on issues around post-conflict transitional justice and gender and sexual violence. The duration of the interviews varied, and most conversations typically lasted between 45 and 120 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured and followed a set of guiding questions, which were used as a 'script' to inform the discussion. I conducted the majority of interviews myself in English, although some interviews were conducted in Acholi together with my research collaborator, who translated.

Depending on the background, experience and expertise of the respective respondents, the interviews were specifically targeted. For instance, various interviews with cultural leaders and local authorities focused on local Acholi gender identities and constructions of masculinities in particular. Other interviews with respondents who work in the justice sector predominantly focused on Uganda's transitional justice landscape, to provide contextual information. Various interviews with representatives of local NGOs and CSOs focused on the dynamics of conflict-related sexual violence as perpetrated within the context of the armed conflict in Northern Uganda. While most interviews primarily focused on specific aspects, the discussions were often much more fluid and simultaneously touched upon various points of interest.

#### **2.4.4. Focus Group Discussions**

In order to supplement some of the information, and specifically to construct a more holistic picture and 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1983) of local masculinities constructions, I also conducted two focus group discussions (FGDs) with a total of 11 male elders (five and six respondents respectively) in two separate locations within local communities. Robins (2011) notes that a focus group discussion is "essentially a group interview, with each participant given the chance to express

himself or herself, but with the additional dynamic of inter-group discussion" (141). Söderström (2011) additionally notes that "[a]s a group interview, this data collection relies not only on the questions posed to the groups in generating the data, but also the group interaction itself" (146).<sup>41</sup> She further acknowledges that in comparison to surveys or individual interviews, FGDs "allow the political and social context [...] to be present in a different way" (*ibid.*).<sup>42</sup> Because of these group dynamics and the potential to foreground the social context in a different way, FGDs proved to be particularly helpful in gaining a richer and more grounded understanding of how masculinities are socially constructed in Acholiland, derived directly from members of the community.

Each of the two FGDs was structured in accordance with three guiding questions, which I developed in collaboration with Kenneth and in consultation with RLP colleagues: 'What does it mean to be a man in Acholiland?'; 'how have ideas of manhood developed over time?' and 'has the conflict impacted these ways of being a man, and if so how?' These relatively broad and open questions enabled focus group respondents to freely and openly voice their perspectives and thus provided a myriad of answers and responses. I specifically decided to engage with male elders during the group discussions, because they possessed a sustained understanding of ways of being a man prior to the conflict as well as during contemporary times, and were therefore able to reflect upon the impact of conflict on manhood in a sequential manner. Both FGDs lasted for approximately 150 minutes, and were conducted in Acholi, with the translation assistance of Kenneth.<sup>43</sup>

A specific limitation of this small sample size and the particular focus on elders is that these viewpoints and findings are not necessarily representative, and that they only provide a particular perspective on masculinities constructions. The selection of FGD participants constituted a deliberate decision to generate understanding deriving from the comprehensive knowledge and experiences of Acholi male elders in particular. While their interpretations might not necessarily be representative of the

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<sup>41</sup> The group dynamic of FGDs at the same time implies that the researcher not only needs to navigate the (power) relationships between the researcher and research participant(s) but furthermore between research participants themselves.

<sup>42</sup> In relation to this, Söderström (2011) moreover argues that FGDs are primarily used to understand and study attitudes, opinions, perspectives and experiences.

<sup>43</sup> During the FGDs, Kenneth directly translated the discussions for me. The FGDs were also audio-recorded and then more thoroughly translated by Kenneth afterwards. After the transcriptions and translation, the recordings were deleted.

viewpoints of young men or women, they nevertheless offer a mirror of Acholi gender constructions and holistically outline how constructions of masculinities have changed over time and in comparison between the pre- and contemporary post-conflict period. Admittedly, additional data from the perspectives of women or young men would potentially have generated additional, complementary or perhaps contradictory information and findings; this is a limitation that I acknowledge.

#### **2.4.5. Participant Reflection and additional Methodological Reflections**

Throughout my period in the field, I also constantly listened, observed, and learned, and thus in many ways also engaged in the ethnographic method of 'participant reflection'. While most ethnographic research refers to this method as 'participant observation' (Clifford 1983), I instead am inspired by anthropologists Finnström (2003) and Arhem (1994), who describe ethnographers' predominant data collection techniques as participant 'reflection', rather than 'observation'. In his seminal study on the conflict in Northern Uganda, Finnström (2003) explains that,

[...] we do the best to participate in the works, questions, joys and sorrows of our informants' everyday life. Then we take a few steps back, to be able to *reflect* upon what we have learnt and experienced, again to step forward to participate. This we do daily in the fieldwork encounter [...] (29) [emphasis added].

This process of participating, listening and learning and then taking a few steps back to *reflect* upon the newly learned insights adequately reflects my own experience of conducting empirical research in Northern Uganda, thus leading me to adapt and borrow Finnström's (2003) and Arhem's (1994) consideration of participant reflection.

In the field, and during the data collection period, simply engaging with non-work related activities, or taking on another task, for instance with RLP, helped me to maintain a certain distance for *reflection* on the at times heart-breaking stories which I heard during the interviews and workshops, before beginning the continuous process of analyzing my data. At the same time, this active process of *reflecting* upon what I had observed, heard and recorded during the data collection cannot narrowly be confined to the field research period, but rather transcended throughout the post-field analysis and the entire process of writing this dissertation at large. The physical and emotional distance between Uganda and the UK and Sweden, where I did the

write up, often proved conducive to develop and maintain a certain level of objectivity necessary for a rigorous and critical analysis.

### ***Informal Fieldwork Encounters: 'To Stop at the Roadside and Take Notes'***

In addition to the various structured and more formalized methods of gathering information as described above, countless more informal and often unexpected conversations with a range of individuals (and groups) proved to be as important and relevant, if at times not even more so.<sup>44</sup> Many of these additional conversations were recorded as field notes. The fact that I had a desk in RLP's Gulu office was invaluable, as it allowed me to have regular brief conversations with my colleagues, which helped tremendously in contextualizing my ideas and claims, and which always generated interesting new findings. Many discussions pertaining to language issues, for instance, are the results of these brief talks, often not exceeding 15 minutes. These interactions allowed me to continuously verify, re-assess and re-define my findings and arguments. From a variety of additional interactions with colleagues, friends and acquaintances, on a range of topics and in different settings, two situations in particular stand out to me. Both examples merit further methodological reflections and illustrate a range of methodological considerations relevant to my research design and fieldwork in a post-conflict environment more generally.

The first example refers to a conversation I had on a bus, on the journey back from Uganda's capital Kampala to Gulu in the north. I was reading Heike Behrend's (1999) ethnography on *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits*, when my travel companion began talking to me about the content of the book, which in itself was extremely fascinating. We had a conversation about Alice<sup>45</sup>, the conflict and spirit mediums. I had just completed reading a section about Alice's father, Severino Lukoya, and I mentioned that I had previously heard that he is still alive, leading a church in Gulu

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<sup>44</sup> The institutional policies of universities' research ethics committees (ERCs) merit critical consideration in relation to these informal conversations, and the data generated by them. Obtaining institutionalized ethical approval for these conversations is difficult, yet they are part and parcel of most fieldwork experiences and should not be disregarded in their methodological significance. Specifically, it is almost impossible to obtain and ensure informed consent for these discussions. I therefore do not directly quote from any of these informal discussions, although their content of course informs my understanding and analysis and substantially contributes to the depth of analysis.

<sup>45</sup> Alice Lakwena was the leader of the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF) rebel group which predated the Lord's Resistance Army, and which fought against the NRA government between 1986-1987/88 (see Chapter 5.2.).

town. This was the case, and as it turned out, my travel companion knew Lukoya quite well. In the days after our return to Gulu, he connected me to him. My interactions and conversations with Lukoya in the weeks to follow were fascinating, providing first-hand accounts and insider knowledge, especially of the early days of the conflict in Northern Uganda. Since Alice's and his group(s) operated in the early years of the conflict when crimes of sexual violence against men were committed (Finnström 2008), Lukoya also had much to say about the context in which these crimes occurred, and the extent to which the different rebel groups knew about acts of male rape.

For me, this encounter shows that timing can be an important aspect when conducting field research. The example also illustrates that, as much as fieldwork is about careful preparation and continuous methodological, ethical and epistemological reflections, at times it is also influenced by seeming randomness of doing a particular activity in a particular location at a particular time - and one's ability to utilize such opportunities in an ethically sensitive manner.

The second example refers to a situation when my research assistant and I were on one of our innumerable journeys on the back of a *boda-boda*, a motorbike, traveling to the field to follow-up with one of our interlocutors. A few days earlier, I had learned about the meaning of a locality in Northern Uganda called *Coo-Pee*, which is of utmost relevance for this study (see Chapter 6.2.). We had planned to arrange an interview with a local cultural leader from *Coo-Pee* to discuss the different interpretations of the place's meaning. As we were navigating our way on the motorbike on an extremely slippery dirt road in the pouring rain of the wet season, we sought shelter from the rain under the protective branches of one of the many large mango trees by the roadside. An elder on his bicycle followed our lead and we began to talk. The *Mzee*<sup>46</sup> shared with us the very same story about *Coo-Pee* that I later heard during the pre-arranged interview, and we ended up having an interesting conversation, about politics, the elections, and about Acholi culture and manhood. This second example reminds me of what Finnström, borrowing from anthropologist Jackson (1998: 208), calls "to stop on the road in order to listen and take notes"

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<sup>46</sup> *Mzee* is a Kiswahili word, which is widely used across Uganda and East Africa to refer to a (male) older person or elder. The term connotates age, respect, wisdom and knowledge, among other traits.

(Finnström 2003: 34). These opportunities exemplify important instances of anthropology, and of embedded empirical fieldwork more generally.

## **2.5. Data Analysis**

Following the detailed description of my diverse data collection techniques, in this section I focus on my approach of disaggregating, structuring and analyzing the data. Detailed attention is paid to the process of coding and organizing my findings, guided by a thematic analytical approach. All data deriving from the participatory workshops, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and field notes were transcribed by myself and carefully stored on a password-secured server, in line with the United Kingdom's 1998 Data Protection Act. This approach adheres to Ulster University's Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research.

For the analysis, I utilized 'computer assisted qualitative data analysis software' (CAQDAS) (Gibbs 2002), using NVivo to store, disaggregate, organize and code the data.<sup>47</sup> I specifically organized and condensed the data by categorizing them along separate research themes and nodes. Prior to the coding exercise, I identified initial broad themes, which reflect the overarching research questions this dissertation is concerned with. Following this identification of broad themes, related sub-themes and nodes were developed, deriving from the data and in accordance with the focus of the thesis, thus following an inductive process (Thorne 2000). These nodes were developed after transcribing the data, and all nodes reflected previously identified themes in the literature and/or aspects that emerged during the data collection process, driven by first analytical reflections while in the field. The process of identifying, developing and refining relevant nodes thereby followed a thematically-driven and inductive approach, "grounded in data from participants" (Creswell 2012: 63), guided by grounded theory as a qualitative methodology (see Chapter 2.2; see Thorne 2000).

Examples for research nodes include 'conflict', to capture background information about the conflict and male-directed sexual violence, 'sexual violence against men' or 'justice', to name just a few. Exemplary and illustrative sub-nodes under the 'justice' node included 'survivors' groups', 'reparations' or 'prosecutions', for instance, thereby reflecting the themes that emerged from the data (see Chapters 7 and 8) and that

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<sup>47</sup> A code-book which guided the coding and analysis process can be found in Appendix V.

mirror debates within the relevant literature (see Chapter 4). During the process of coding, the nodes and sub-nodes were further refined and developed, and more concrete sub-nodes were added.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Ethical Reflections on Anonymity and Confidentiality***

Throughout the analysis, quotes and data deriving from the research are used both directly and indirectly. Following Swaine's (2011) lead, and guided by feminist research methods in the social sciences (see Tickner 2005), direct quotations are used as much as possible to "[...] enable the reader to 'hear' what the researcher heard" (Reinharz and Davidman 1992: 39) and to avoid the all too common problem of speaking for others (Alcoff 1991; see Chapter 1.6).

In the interest of anonymity and confidentiality, and particularly in the interest of informants and especially survivors, no respondents' personal identities and locations will be revealed. The four workshop discussions are numbered (*Workshops 1 - 4*), without any reference to their locations. The personal identities and geographical information for participants from the two focus group discussions (FGDs) with male community members and the in-depth key-informant interviews are also not revealed. Instead, FGDs and interviews will be labeled according to temporal indicators, by referring to the date of the specific data collection exercise (*e.g. Interview, 5 June 2016*).<sup>49</sup>

An exception to this strict preservation of anonymity is the in-depth case study of Okwera, which opened the thesis (see Chapter 1.2) and which is followed throughout this dissertation. Okwera's story, including his full name, location and his experience, has previously been published as a written narrative (RLP 2014a) and is included in RLP's video-documentaries on sexual violence against men and boys (RLP 2009; RLP 2014b). Okwera himself explicitly stated to me, as well as to many of my RLP colleagues, that "when a mushroom has grown, it no longer fears the sun" (*Field notes, 1 June 2016*), to confirm that he wanted his identity revealed and his story

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<sup>48</sup> Although centered on the process of thematic coding, data analysis in general is a manifold and continuous process. My analysis began with early reflections in the field and commenced during the write-up and revision period of the dissertation. The above-described methodological approach of grounded theory (Creswell 2012) consistently guided the analysis by inductively developing overarching theoretical debates and frameworks derived from the empirical data.

<sup>49</sup> When two or more interviews were conducted on one day, the references will be qualified and specified by referring to 'Interview a', 'Interview b', 'interview c' and so forth. I did not conduct more than four interviews on one day at any given point.

publicly known. Finnström (2003) similarly utilizes the Acholi proverb "the growing millet does not fear the sun" (*bel ka otwi pe lworu ceng*) (15), in relation to some of his informants insisting on having their full names and identities mentioned throughout his ethnography, "which they claimed gave authenticity to the stories [...]" (*ibid.*). Anthropologist van der Geest (2003) reflects upon his experience of conducting ethnographic research when he argues that more often than not, informants want to be remembered for what they say and how they contributed to the study (see Finnström 2003). To this end, I follow Okwera's request as disrespecting his wish and anonymizing his narrative would be unethical.<sup>50</sup>

## 2.6. Conclusion

The research design and methodology adopted in this thesis, while utilizing a diversity of complementary data collection techniques, aims to foreground the experiences and perspectives of male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda, following an ontology from below. In particular, the participatory character adopted for the study and the collaboration with the Refugee Law Project, which enabled me to join an established process of conducting research on sexual violence against men and with male survivors within this context, aimed to facilitate an empowering and emancipatory research process. My intention and motivation throughout the data collection period was to collaboratively conduct research *with* local people, rather than *on* them (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995). Such an approach is important to ensure ethically sensitive and careful engagement with a vulnerable population of survivors, which must be the imperative of all research with conflict-affected communities, as emphasized throughout this chapter.

Deriving from these methodological premises, in the following chapter I critically scrutinize the literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men, to situate my study within existing research.

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<sup>50</sup> Since I refer to previously published material in which his identity, location and experience are revealed (RLP 2009, 2011, 2014), not referring to his real name would have proven counter-productive and would not have protected his identity.



## Chapter 3: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence against Men

### 3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I critically review the expanding literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men. I identify numerous gaps in existing research, and situate my dissertation within this body of scholarship. By comprehensively reviewing this relatively new area of study that emerged within the past decade, I build on inter- and multi-disciplinary literature, primarily drawing from social and political science, legal studies, and anthropology. I engage with the (sub-)fields of masculinities studies (Kimmel, Hearn and Connell 2005); gender studies and feminist theorizing (Tickner 2005), including feminist international relations (Sjoberg 2013; Peterson 2010); and a growing body of research on conflict-related sexual violence (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; Cohen 2016). Scholars from across these different disciplines at times approach the phenomenon of sexual violence against men differently, setting diverging foci, asking different research questions and explaining the dynamics of such violence from different angles, thus offering a variety of diverse standpoints, to be covered by this chapter. In combination, this chapter and the next, focusing on transitional justice literature, constitute the overall framework for establishing the intersections between male-directed sexual violence and transitional justice, thereby positioning this dissertation.

The past decade witnessed an increase in scholarly (Féron 2015) and political attention (UN 2013) on male-directed sexual violence during war, contributing towards the inclusion of male victims into dominant conceptualizations of conflict-related sexual violence.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, despite important progress, male survivors of sexual violence only "remain a marginal concern" (Grey and Shepherd 2012: 115), and most dominant writing on wartime rape continues to imply that sexual violence against men constitutes an exception to the norm (*ibid.*).<sup>52</sup> Even though recent years observed "a major shift towards including male victims in international policy on wartime sexual violence" (Touquet and Gorris 2016: 1), and a marked increase in

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<sup>51</sup> For instance, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2106 in June 2013 and a workshop on Sexual Violence against Men and Boys in Conflict Situations in the same year (UN 2013) constituted a particularly significant political step towards recognizing male-directed sexual violence.

<sup>52</sup> To illustrate, Gabriel states that sexual violence in conflict is "committed disproportionately - *if not exclusively* - against women and girls" (2004: 43) [emphasis added].

scholarly publications, much remains unknown about the scope, forms and dynamics of sexual violence against men.<sup>53</sup>

Throughout this chapter, I argue that male-directed<sup>54</sup> sexual violence during war and armed conflict is committed more frequently than popularly assumed (Sivakumaran 2007), but that it remains consistently under-researched. Recent research on gender and conflict increasingly recognizes that men and boys are frequently victimized by sexual violence alongside women and girls (Meger 2016a), who remain disproportionately affected by such violence (Cohen 2016). I also argue that sexual violence against men is closely linked to gendered dimensions of violence in general (Stemple 2011), situated within gendered power structures which give rise to gender-based violence, including against women, more broadly (Cockburn 2010; Enloe 2004; Tickner 2001). The review in this chapter also evidences that much prevailing scholarship on the topic remains largely descriptive (e.g. Johnson 2008, 2010) and under-theorized. Existing studies on sexual violence against men are furthermore characterized by a lack of empirical data. Despite a few noteworthy exceptions (Dolan 2014; Edström, Dolan et al. 2016), male survivors' experiences and perspectives remain strikingly absent from the existing body of research and knowledge.

The literature review pursued throughout this chapter is structured in accordance with the most prevalent themes reflected in existing research.<sup>55</sup> The chapter commences in part 2, by re-visiting the conceptual links between masculinities and sexual violence against men. Part 3 critically examines existing definitions and conceptualizes the understanding of conflict-related sexual violence against men adopted in this dissertation. Part 4 examines the scope and frequency of male-directed sexual violence during armed conflicts across time and space, evidencing that sexual violence is committed more frequently than commonly acknowledged. I proceed in part 5 by reviewing numerous explanations regarding the occurrence of

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<sup>53</sup> Likewise much remains unknown about the dynamics, motivations and consequences of sexual violence against women (Cohen 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Although 'male-directed' can broadly refer to sexual violence perpetrated against both men and boys (see Dolan 2014), in this dissertation in general I focus on conflict-related sexual violence against men specifically.

<sup>55</sup> In addition to the themes explored here, a few existing studies also focus on the consequences of male-directed sexual violence (see Dolan 2014; Peel et al. 2000). Rather than listing the physical symptoms as covered by the literature separately, I integrate this discussion with the case-specific examination of various consequences of male rape in Northern Uganda in Chapter 5.3.4.

sexual violence as prevalent throughout the literature. I conclude this chapter by laying out the numerous identified lacunae in the literature, clarifying how this thesis aims to address some of these gaps.

### **3.2. Masculinities, Conflict and Male-Directed Sexual Violence**

In this section, I expand upon the conceptual and theoretical relationship(s) between masculinities and sexual violence against men (see Chapter 1.3), arguing that crimes of sexual violence against men are immediately underpinned by masculine gender constructs. I specifically focus on the conceptual linkages between masculinities and violence as well as masculine vulnerabilities, both of which are fundamentally important for understanding the dynamics of male-directed sexual violence.

Somewhat surprisingly, much of the narrowly focused literature on sexual violence against males during armed conflict by and large does not sufficiently draw on and engage with the existing substantial body of research on male sexual abuse in general and outside the context of war (Mendel 1995; Weiss 2008). These studies are primarily written from a public health, psycho-social and/or psychological perspective, contrary to much of the conflict-related sexual violence literature. While significant contextual variation exists regarding the dynamics of wartime male-directed sexual violence vis-à-vis such violence outside the context of armed conflict, important insight can be gained from this literature.

Many of the arguments on conflict-related male-directed sexual violence are informed by general discussions about gender and conflict (Sjoberg 2013). Over the past few decades, feminist scholarship has highlighted and critically illuminated the gendered dimensions of complex emergencies and conflict-affected contexts (see Chapter 1.3; Enloe 2004; Cockburn 1989; Goldstein 2001; Moser and Clark 2001; Peterson 2010). Scholarship on gender and armed conflict, and feminist theories in particular, have provided crucial observations and explanations for the occurrence of gender-based crimes and violence against women (O'Rourke 2013; Coulter 2009; Swaine 2011), including but not limited to sexual violence (Wood 2013; Boesten 2014). Although significant contextual variation and gendered specificities exist between sexual violence against women and men, much of this feminist theorizing is instrumental for understanding the gendered dynamics and dimensions of male-directed sexual violence (see Skjelsbaek 2001; Alison 2007). Solangon and Patel

(2012) attest that analyses of sexual violence against men can well be explored "through applying causal theories based on female victims of sexual violence" (417), although of course significant gendered differences and particularities exist. Sivakumaran (2007) likewise observes similarities and synergies between many of the conceptual and theoretical building-blocks utilized to explain sexual violence perpetrated against both women and men.

As emphasized before, the dynamics of conflict-related sexual violence against men (and women) are immediately underpinned by masculinities (Wright 2014; Del Zotto and Jones 2002). In brief, male-directed sexual violence is predominantly understood to compromise male survivors' masculine identities (Tadros 2016), while simultaneously awarding a sense of hyper-masculinity to the (often male) perpetrators (see Chapter 6.6). Recent years have witnessed increasing attention to masculinities in scholarship on gender and armed conflict (Myrntinen et al. 2016). The majority of these studies, however, have focused narrowly on hyper- and militarized masculinities (see Henry 2017). This concentration on the intersections between masculinities and the various forms of violence associated with them constituted a primary unit of analysis for many of the earlier critical masculinities studies (e.g. Connell 1987; Kimmel 1987; Messner 1990). If masculinities are integrated into gendered analyses of war and armed conflict, these studies thus tend to mostly focus on the men who commit violence and the forms of violence perpetrated by men (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009; Higate and Hopton 2005; Higate 2003).

### **3.2.1. Masculinities and Violence**

Arguably, analyzing the 'violences of men' (Hearn 1998) seems sensible, given that certain notions of masculinities appear to be driving much of the obvious gender inequalities prevalent throughout society and much of the (gender-based and sexual) violence perpetrated against both women and men (Skjelsbaek 2001; Alison 2007).<sup>56</sup> A key point to this analysis is the empirical and conceptual observation that most male survivors of sexual violence have been violated by men, exposing the empirical

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<sup>56</sup> These conceptual reflections on the linkages between masculinities and violence are fundamentally important for understanding the dynamics of sexual violence against men, most of which is perpetrated by men, with only few exceptions, and driven by masculinities (Sjoberg 2016).

reality that when engaging men as victims of violence, we similarly often encounter men as perpetrators (Sjoberg 2016).

Michael Kimmel (1987), one of the founding members of the (sub-)discipline of men and masculinities studies, states that violence often constitute the single most important marker of manhood. Across time and space and statistically, it is men who predominantly commit violence, whether during peacetime or in situations of armed conflict (Cockburn 2001; Wright 2014). Similarly, men or masculine actors predominantly control systems of institutionalized violence, such as prisons, the police and the military (Flood 1997). Deriving from these apparent correlations, it perhaps seems not surprising that it is also men who predominantly engage in warfare (Cockburn 2001). Influential gender scholars such as Connell (2000) or Kimmel (2005) have found clear linkages between certain forms of masculinities and violence. At the same time, however, it is also men who across time and space remain disproportionally affected by many (albeit not all) forms of conflict-related violence (Carpenter 2003), and men indeed constitute the vast majority of death-victims during armed conflict (Wright 2014).

Instead of equating men and masculinities with violence, it is important to recognize that "most men are not violent; but when violence occurs, it is mostly men who do it" (Flood 1997: 1). Drawing connections between masculinities and violence is not to suggest that all men are naturally violent (Wright 2014). Rather, "interrogating where and how men are situated in relation to the creation, perpetration and institutionalization of violence" (Cahn, Ní Aoláin and Haynes 2009: 104) reveals that especially within the context of war, certain forms of militarized and hyper masculinities<sup>57</sup> are more closely linked to violence than other (often more common and prevalent) conceptions of manhood. Frequently, these forms of hyper- and militarized masculinities materialize in order to aspire to a hegemonic conception of manhood (Connell 2002).

In light of the evidence regarding men's perpetration of violence, the enduring question of why some masculinities are more closely connected to violence arises. Without oversimplifying or essentializing the issue, it is important to point out that in

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<sup>57</sup> Angela Harris (2000) defines hyper masculinity as a form of "masculinity in which the structures against femininity and homosexuality are especially intense and in which physical strength and aggressiveness are paramount" (793).

many societies, violence "may literally make the man" (Cahn, Ní Aoláin and Hanyes 2009: 104), and often constitutes an important element to attain masculinity. Violence can be linked to gaining social status and self-value (Theidon 2009; Hamber 2010). Since (hegemonic) masculinity is not automatically given but rather socially constructed and must be achieved (Hearn 2004; Beasley 2008), it requires particular behaviors and actions in specific situations (Connell 2002). Frequently and in various societal contexts violence may be seen as either necessary or acceptable in order to attain hegemonic masculine attributes (Wright 2014).

Cahn, Ní Aoláin and Haynes (2009) point out that "[i]n multiple contexts, engaging in violence is a rational choice for men when few other opportunities may be provided to gain economic security [...], social status and value within their communities, and security [...] for their families and communities" (107). Antonia Porter (2013b) further posits the 'frustration-aggression' hypothesis for understanding the linkages between some norms of masculinities and violence. According to this explanation, especially in situations of armed conflict, turmoil or economic insecurity, men are confronted with significant barriers in achieving the dominant markers of manhood (Hollander 2014; Cleaver 2002), which in turn can cause "feelings of shame, humiliation, frustration, inadequacy and loss of dignity" (Porter, A. 2013: 488). Inabilities to live up to masculine expectations in more conventional ways may lead to frustrations, which some men may respond to with violence to attain socially expected standards of manhood (*ibid.*). Explaining male violence as an expression of or a reaction to frustration supports Dolan's (2002) claim that violence is not an inherent or embodied masculine trait, but rather constitutes a response of men feeling unable to fulfill hegemonic but increasingly unattainable models of masculinity. As noted by MacKenzie and Foster (2017), "violence, from this perspective, represents both an expression of power and dominance and simultaneously an expression of masculinity nostalgia, disempowerment and male vulnerability" (14). These elucidations do not attempt to justify or excuse violent behavior, but rather aim to understand and explain male violence.

### **3.2.2. Masculine Vulnerabilities**

Such explanations, however, have all too often resulted in false and misleading portrayals of men as universal aggressors in armed conflict and women as universal

victims (Dolan 2015). In this section, I broaden this scope, by looking beyond violent masculinities and also considering masculine vulnerabilities, and by arguing that essentialist understandings of gender have contributed towards marginalizing male vulnerabilities during armed conflict.

Interestingly, these essentialist and dichotomous categorizations of men as perpetrators and women as victims are criticized from what can be seen as two separate yet partially inter-linked lines of argumentation. On one hand, critical feminist scholarship criticizes much of the prevailing gender discourse for essentializing women as weak and vulnerable victims in need of patriarchal (and white, Western) protection from the global world order (Engel 2013; Otto 2009). Such criticism challenges the (almost) exclusive phrasing of women as passive and vulnerable victims in need of external and masculine protection (Cockburn 2001; McWilliams and Ní Aoláin 2013). Previous studies have convincingly argued that these simplistic portrayals automatically render women as ever-vulnerable, ignoring the diverse experiences and roles women embody within the context of armed conflicts and over-shadowing their agency (Amony 2015; Baines 2015, 2016; Coulter 2009; Utas 2005; MacKenzie 2012).

On the other hand, another group of scholars (see Carpenter 2003, 2006; Dolan 2011, 2015) criticizes the mainstream gender discourse for putting forward an unreconstructed view of men (Dowd 2010) which essentializes them as perpetrators only, thereby neglecting men as victims and male vulnerabilities (Stemple 2009). According to this research, common gendered assumptions reduce men to being (naturally) violent and exclusively view them in their instrumentalist capacities as perpetrators, or potentially as 'agents of change', but not as possible victims (Lewis 2014). This ignores men's diverse experiences of victimhood during armed conflicts, as well as the manifold ways that men are victimized by violence and impacted by masculinities constructions themselves (Stemple 2011).

Even though approaching the problem from partially different angles and with diverging foci, both lines of argumentation express concern regarding the mainstream literature's view on gender relations. Perceiving men solely as perpetrators (and rarely as vulnerable) and women overwhelmingly as victims (and rarely as agents and actors) is therefore a "heavily gendered narrative of war" (Zarkov 2001: 71). This dominant account neglects feminine agency (Baines 2016;

Coulter 2009; Utas 2005) while simultaneously ignoring masculine vulnerabilities during wars (Carpenter 2006). Among the forms of conflict-related male vulnerabilities which in recent years received increasing attention are crimes of sexual violence against men (Myrttinen et al. 2016), that constitute the focus of the remainder of this chapter and of this dissertation at large.

### **3.3. Conceptualization and Definition**

Throughout this section, I conceptualize and define conflict-related sexual violence against men. I scrutinize different definitions of male-directed conflict-related sexual violence as prevalent throughout the literature, to arrive at the understanding of such violence used in this dissertation. Based upon this critical overview, I demonstrate that previous conceptions of sexual violence during war largely marginalized such violence against men, while at the same time placing a heavy emphasis on penetrative rape. I argue that these exclusions necessitate a gender-inclusive and holistic conceptualization of sexual violence, inclusive of male victims and a variety of sexual crimes, as laid out towards the end of this section.

#### ***Defining Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Men***

While conflict-related sexual violence broadly constitutes an act of gender-based violence, an umbrella-term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will based on socially ascribed gender differences (IASC 2005; see Okello and Hovil 2007),<sup>58</sup> in this dissertation I specifically focus on sexual violence. Feminist scholar Skjelsbaek (2001) broadly defines sexual violence as any form of "violence with a sexual manifestation" (212). Defining what constitutes sexual violence, however, can be difficult and is conditioned by various theoretical, conceptual and methodological challenges, as well as different contextual, cultural and social factors. As Leiby (2009a) observes, "what is understood as sexual violence varies widely across ethnic, religious and social groups" (81), as well as across scholarly disciplines, and therefore, a whole variety of different definitions circulate across the literature.

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<sup>58</sup> Okello and Hovil (2007) note that this definition incorporates various legal, physical and psychological dimensions of GBV, and is broader than previous definitions, which assumed that GBV affects only women.



The prefix of 'conflict-related' refers to acts of sexual violence "occurring in a conflict or post-conflict setting that have direct [...] links with the conflict itself [...]" (UN 2014: 2). This includes situations of active armed combat and hostilities, as well as internal or external displacement caused by political violence or armed conflict. Conflict-related can also include situations of post-conflict violence occurring mostly for up to five years after the cessation of hostilities or a peace agreement (Themner and Wallensteen 2012), and pre-conflict political uprisings that ultimately lead to conflict.<sup>59</sup> For instance, sexual and gender-based violence as a continuum of violence (Swaine 2011), extending from the active conflict period into the immediate post-conflict phase, can be considered as a form of *conflict-related* violence (Cohen 2016).

### ***Limitations of Existing Definitions of Sexual Violence***

The significant scholarly and political attention paid to the phenomenon of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence over the past two decades yielded a variety of different definitions. Arguably, many of these definitions are problematic in different ways and from various perspectives, as they (implicitly or explicitly) exclude sexual violence against men and/or place a heavy emphasis on penetrative rape.

Firstly, especially many earlier classifications of sexual violence are too narrow, reductionist, essentialist or exclusive, frequently not acknowledging men and boys as victims (e.g. Stiglmeier 1994; Seifert 1996; Sharlach 2001; Thornhill and Palmer 2000). These exclusions are exemplified through studies which emphasize that sexual violence is committed *exclusively* against women and girls (e.g. Gabriel 2004; de Brouwer 2005). To provide just one illustrative example, Sharlach (2001: 1) defines rape as "any sexual penetration of a female by a male (or with an object) that takes place without her consent."<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, many United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) on conflict and gender under the framework of the

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<sup>59</sup> In legal terms, only violence committed during active armed conflict, but not during pre- and post-conflict times, is legally covered by the judicial prohibitions of the law of armed conflict and international humanitarian law. This can potentially carry implications for questions of accountability, while also exposing the differences between legal definitions and other disciplinary, including social scientific, definitions. My understanding of conflict-related as adopted here can thus be situated in social scientific definitions.

<sup>60</sup> While the reference to rape with an object leaves open the possibility of female (or gender non-conforming) perpetrators, the specification of a *female* victim and the female pronoun *her* in describing the victim leave no room for men and boys as victims.

Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (Kirby and Shepherd 2016)<sup>61</sup> exclusively include women and girls (or at times women and children)<sup>62</sup> as potential victims. These definitions thereby systematically exclude the possibility of men as victims of sexual violence (Grey and Shepherd 2012; Stemple 2009). Only in 2013, with UNSCR 2106, sexual violence against men was acknowledged by the UN's WPS agenda for the first time. Despite these limitations, however, especially more recent definitions have tended to employ gender-neutral language, thereby also recognizing men and boys alongside women and girls as potential victims of sexual violence (e.g. Cohen and Nordas 2014).

Secondly, various conceptualizations of conflict-related sexual violence place a heavy emphasis on penetrative rape, thereby excluding and ignoring various other forms of sexual (and gender-based) violence (Wood 2015), such as sexual torture, forced castration, or sexual threats (Okello and Hovil 2007; Theidon 2012). According to Rubio-Marin and Sandoval (2011), "limiting the analysis to a rape-centred understanding of sexual violence may obscure other forms of equally grave sexual and reproductive violence" (1065). Leiby (2009) likewise observes that only concentrating on rape overlooks the multiple ways in which men and women are otherwise sexually victimized. Similarly, various definitions of sexual and gender-based violence primarily concentrate on sexual violence while not including other manifestations of gender-based violence, which receive less attention and resources and are consequentially being considered as less significant or relevant (Rubio-Marin and Sandoval 2011). Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2010: 12-13) therefore emphasize the need for a broader conceptualization of sexual and gender-based violence, beyond sexualized crimes only, including other manifestations of gendered violence, and including men as victims.

Focusing on conflict-related sexual violence against men specifically, different definitions include various physical acts of sexual violence, such as rape, sexual torture and/or genital beatings (see Sivakumaran 2007; Meger 2015), while not paying sufficient attention to what Ní Aoláin (2000) refers to as 'connected' harms. Examples of connected forms of male-directed sexual violence may include

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<sup>61</sup> Such as for instance UNSCR 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) 1960 (2010).

<sup>62</sup> While factually, boys are included in the more gender-inclusive reference to 'women and children', in practice it appears that 'children' is often read as 'girls' (see Carpenter 2003). While girls as children are often specifically mentioned, boys often are not.

instances where men are forced (often at gunpoint) to themselves commit sexual violence, often against (female) family or community members (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009). Other cases of connected male sexual harms include situations where men are forcefully made to watch (mostly female) members of their families and communities being raped or sexually violated in front of them (Coulter 2009).<sup>63</sup> In these cases, the sexual violations are clearly acted out on female bodies, and women and girls are immediate physical and psychological victims, while men may also be targeted emotionally and/or psychologically (Dolan 2011).

Feminist scholarship has demonstrated that these harms can be linked to the (perceived) "masculine loss of power demonstrated in the inability to protect 'their' women" (Ní Aoláin 2000: 79) from sexual violence (see Chapter 6.2.2). While the dynamics surrounding these connected harms are thus problematically based upon patriarchal assumptions of vulnerable women in need of male protection (Otto 2009), they are nevertheless reflective of the lived realities and harms experienced by many men in situations of armed conflict (Coulter 2009; Dolan 2010). The exclusion of these harms from dominant conceptions of sexual violence against men thus potentially results in a narrowed and simplified understanding of such crimes, under-acknowledging a myriad of complex gendered and sexual harms affecting men.

Furthermore, sexual violence against men is frequently coded, classified and categorized as torture, often without any recognition of the sexual component and nature of the crime (Sivakumaran 2010; Dolan 2014; Leiby 2009).<sup>64</sup> While sexual violence can and often does meet the threshold level of harm to constitute torture (Copelon 1994; Gaer 2011), I nevertheless caution that to exclusively categorize certain acts as torture without recognizing their sexual component, including the resulting sexual and gendered consequences, can prove problematic.<sup>65</sup> As noted by

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<sup>63</sup> The following case provides an example of such indirect or connected forms of sexual violence, quoted from Coulter (2009: 145): "John's mother and his aunt were raped and sexually abused in front of him. John said that this all happened in his presence and that it hurt him immensely, but most of all, he said, he was shamed by the sexual violation of his mother in his presence; perhaps also he was ashamed on a personal level as he could do nothing to protect her [...]."

<sup>64</sup> For instance, instances of torture with a sexual component in detention facilities in Northern Ireland are barely classified or publicly considered as sexual violence, but rather coded as torture (Cobain 2012). Other scenarios and cases in which sexual violence is primarily coded as torture include the context of Peru (Leiby 2009), Sri Lanka (Peel et al. 2000) or Bosnia-Herzegovina (Carlson 2006).

<sup>65</sup> Only in the mid 1990's, in light of the massive perpetration of sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide (Askin 1997) and the wars in the former Yugoslavia (Zarkov 2001), did scholarly developments (Copelon 1993) and international jurisprudence move towards more fully establishing a connection between what has previously been treated as two distinct categories. Landmark cases at

Sivakumaran (2010), "the danger of characterizing sexual violence against men and boys only under the rubric of torture is that men and boys will continue to be seen as unsusceptible to sexual violence, reinforcing the view that sexual violence is a problem for women and girls only" (273). In addition, exclusively classifying sexual violence against men as torture without acknowledging the violations' sexual components prohibits men from accessing the necessary harm-responsive, gender- and sex-specific health and psychological services and legal remedies, because sexual violence as such is not documented and recognized (see Leiby 2009).

The problem of misrecognizing and misrepresenting sexual violence against men as torture, however, is not only conditioned by the external categorizations of the violence, but also linked to survivors' self-representations and perceptions of these acts. Classifications of male-directed sexual crimes as either torture *or* sexual violence may thus prove problematic from a survivors' point of view, given that these respective categories can be perceived differently by individual survivors, depending on the gendered socio, political and cultural context. As I unpack more carefully and specifically applied to the context of Northern Uganda (see Chapter 6), sexual violence against men often negatively impacts on male survivors' masculine identities in a myriad of inter-twined ways (also see Alison 2007; Dolan 2014; Edström, Dolan et al. 2016).

In contrast, crimes of torture may not necessarily have such compromising effects on male survivors' masculinities, but may instead even have an opposite effect. Historiographies of torture reveal that traditionally and contemporarily, torture is primarily employed against men (see Cobain 2012), and various torture methods and techniques were specifically developed and designed to hurt and harm men (Scarry 1985). Conditioned by discourses and interpretations of torture, having survived such acts may under certain circumstances be associated with a certain masculine status, and might to some extent even reward masculinity, albeit at great personal, physical and psychological costs.<sup>66</sup> Categorizing certain violent crimes and harmful acts as

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both the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights as well as at the European Court of Human Rights contributed towards recognizing acts of rape and sexual violence as constituting torture and inhumane treatment.

<sup>66</sup> A case in point would be US Senator John McCain. As a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War, McCain was subjected to different forms of torture. In his self-representation and the external representation of him and his experience, the fact that McCain survived torture can be seen as awarding him a boost to his masculinity, portraying him as hyper-masculine for his ability to survive extraordinary violence.

either torture or as sexual violence might thus have different effects on survivors' (perceived) masculine identities.

### ***A Holistic Definition of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Men***

Departing from these challenges and limitations of existing conceptualizations, I define conflict-related sexual violence more inclusively and broadly.

I specifically draw upon the understanding of sexual violence as described in the Rome Statute (RS) (1998) of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has been praised for its progressive and inclusive character (Cohen and Nordas 2014), and specifically for its gender-sensitive approach (Dolan 2014; Sivakumaran 2013). By utilizing gender-neutral language, the Rome Statute acknowledges that sexual violence can be committed against women and men. The Rome Statute likewise approaches sexual violence in broad terms, including rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity. Therefore, not only does the definition put "beyond any doubt that men and boys can be raped" (Sivakumaran 2013: 84), but also includes various acts of sexual violence that are not limited to penetrative rape, thereby contributing to a broad and inclusive understanding of sexual violence (Cohen and Nordas 2014; RLP 2013).

Deriving from this broadened approach, conflict-related sexual violence in this dissertation is conceptually defined as: acts or threats of violence of a sexual nature perpetrated directly on and against victims; that the victim may be forced to perform; or watch being performed on others within the family or community. This broadened conception uses gender-neutral language and thus accounts for male and female victims and survivors. Following this conceptual definition, male-directed sexual violence in particular can broadly include: penetrative anal and/or oral rape (Sivakumaran 2007), sexual torture (Leiby 2009), mutilation and beatings of the genitals (Carlson 2006), castration or enforced sterilization (Carpenter 2006), sexual humiliation<sup>67</sup>, as well as sexual slavery and enslavement (Russell 2007). Cases of men being forced (often at gunpoint) to perform coercive sexual intercourse (often

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<sup>67</sup> Crimes of sexual humiliation may specifically include forced nudity, forced masturbation or men and boys being forced or subjected to violent and degrading sexual acts, such as for instance being forced to commit sexual acts with animals or objects (in private and in public), or being dragged with a cord connected to the penis or the testicles (Sivakumaran 2010).

with female family members) (Coulter 2009; Dolan 2014) and of female family members being raped in front of their husbands, brothers, and sons can likewise constitute connected forms of male-directed sexual violence (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013). This conceptually defined understanding of conflict-related sexual violence against men is important to set the parameters for the analysis to be pursued throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

### **3.4. Scope, Frequency and Prevalence**

Deriving from this conceptual understanding of conflict-related sexual violence against men, this section focuses on the scope, frequency and prevalence of such violations. This is important to back-up the argument that male-directed sexual violence is perpetrated more frequently than commonly assumed (Sivakumaran 2007). While incorporating this examination of prevalence and existing evidence, however, I also underscore that conceptually and empirically, frequency and numbers should not matter as to whether or not these crimes are addressed. Even if the numbers would be significantly lower than they appear to be, male-directed sexual violence requires the attention, recognition and (justice) responses scholars and practitioners are advocating for (see Dolan 2014; UN 2013).

Sivakumaran (2007) observes that "sexual violence against men has been documented as taking place in many armed conflicts" (257), and a growing body of literature provides various examples of male-directed sexual violence in different settings, such as part of military campaigns, in detention and during displacement and forced migration, as well as in different geographical contexts (Sivakumaran 2007). Previous research has documented cases of sexual violence against men in over 25 conflicts, and in at least 59 when including boys as victims (Bastick et al. 2007; Cohen and Nordas 2014; Touquet and Gorris 2016).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> A survey of the existing literature documents male-directed sexual violence within the context of the conflicts in, amongst others: El Salvador, the wars in the former Yugoslavia (Carpenter 2006; Del Zotto and Jones 2002), Egypt (Tadros 2016), Northern Ireland (Cobain 2012), Sri Lanka (Peel et al. 2000), Liberia (Johnson et al. 2008), Sierra Leone (Coulter 2009), Burundi (Dolan 2014), the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Féron 2017; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013), Peru (Leiby 2009), Syria, Libya and Northern Uganda (Esuruku 2012; Dolan 2009).

### **3.4.1. Existing Evidence - The Frequency of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Men**

Mirroring dynamics of sexual violence in general (see Cohen 2013; Wood 2013), the numbers, intensities and occurrence of sexual violence against men are characterized by variation (Wood 2006) and differ across space and time (Solangon and Patel 2012). Systematically assessing the frequency of conflict-related sexual violence in general (Cohen and Nordas 2014), including against men (Dolan 2014), is immensely difficult for a variety of reasons, as discussed in more detail below. Nevertheless, despite numerous conceptual, methodological and epistemological challenges (Cohen, Hoover Green and Wood 2013), existing research offers preliminary insights into the frequency of male-directed sexual violence across different settings. Not surprisingly, the results of these studies, which employ different methodologies and varying definitions of sexual violence against men (see Chapter 3.3), differ vastly across different conflicts and over time. Variation theory, as primarily used by Wood (2006) and others (see Swaine 2015), demonstrates huge variability of the scope of conflict-related sexual violence in different cases, which can also be extended to such violence against males.

To illustrate, a preliminary study by Dolan and RLP screening 447 male refugees residing in refugee settlements in western Uganda, of which 99 per cent originated from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), revealed that "13.4 per cent had experienced an incident of sexual violence in the preceding 12 months, rising to 38.5 per cent if looking at their whole lives" (Dolan 2014: 2). The study includes cases of violence with immediate links to the numerous armed conflicts in the DRC. A similar screening exercise of South Sudanese refugees living in settlements in Northern Uganda from 2017 revealed that just under four per cent disclosed experience of rape, although these numbers "do not reflect full disclosure" (Dolan 2017: 1).

Another prominent figure recurring in the literature is an example from the wars in the former Yugoslavia (1992-1995): Out of 6,000 inmates in a concentration camp in Sarajevo canton in Bosnia-Herzegovina, roughly 5,000 were men, of whom 80 per cent have reportedly been sexually violated (Sivakumaran 2010). Various forms of sexual and gender-based violence occurred during the wars in the territories of the

former Yugoslavia, perpetrated against women and men (Bassiouni and McCormick 1996; Zarkov 2001), including widespread serial and gang rape (of men and women) (Sorensen 2011) or specifically male-directed forced castration (Carlson 2006; Carpenter 2006).

Focusing on conflict-related sexual violence against men in Peru, Leiby's (2009a) seminal work further uproots common contextual assumption about the extent of sexual violence against men. According to the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Comision para la Verdad y Reconciliation, CVR*), out of 583 documented cases of sexual violence, "only 11, or 2 per cent, were perpetrated against men" (Leiby 2009a; 79). Leiby's (2009a) work in the Commission's archives and with additional primary sources, however, demonstrates that "the percentage of male victims of sexual violence is higher than commonly expected and higher than previously reported [by the CVR]" (82). Instead of the two per cent of male victims referred to in the Commission's final report, Leiby's work indicates between 22 and 29 per cent of male sexual violence survivors amongst the violations covered by the CVR (*ibid.*). One potential explanation for this divergence is the CVR's conceptualization of sexual violence, which despite being technically gender-neutral focuses solely on penetrative rape, thereby excluding various other forms of sexual violence, which were instead coded as torture. Leiby's analysis (2009a) instead shows that the most frequently reported forms of sexual abuse against men were cases of sexual humiliation (46 per cent), sexual mutilation (20 per cent) and sexual torture (15 per cent). The case of Peru therefore constitutes a poignant example to illustrate some of the difficulties of categorizing male-directed sexual violence and the consequential challenges resulting from too narrow and too reductionist conceptualizations (see Chapter 3.3).

In Liberia, a survey of 1,666 adults affected by the country's civil war found that 32.6 per cent of male combatants experienced sexual violence, while 16.5 per cent were forced to be sexual servants (Johnson et al. 2008). A similar large-N study by Johnson et al. (2010) in the eastern territories of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) found that the rate of reported sexual violence among men was 23.6 per cent, while 64.5 per cent of male study participants reported being exposed to forms of conflict-related sexual violence. According to the empirical data underpinning their study, there are approximately "1.31 million men as survivors of



sexual violence in the eastern region of the DRC" (*ibid.*: 559). Numerical indicators for the eastern DRC, however, vary substantially, with other studies suggesting between six and ten per cent of men as victims of sexual violence (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010), to about 20 per cent of sexually violated men (Peel et al. 2000). Such statistical discrepancies and divergences indicate the general difficulty of quantifying the extent of conflict-related sexual violence against men (see below).

In combination, these different studies from a variety of case sites suggest that male-directed sexual violence within the context of war and armed conflict is more widespread than has thus far been acknowledged. In addition to these initial insights, it may well be assumed that other conflict situations across time and space likewise experienced sexual violence against men. Clearly, more empirical work is needed, especially on the extent to which boys or male adolescents suffered as victims of sexual violence in (post-)conflict scenarios (Dolan 2014).

### **3.4.2. Challenges of Quantifying Sexual Violence against Men**

In this section, drawing from previous research, I examine the challenges of quantifying sexual violence against men. I argue that these challenges are underpinned by stereotypical views of gender and are partially (co-)responsible for the under-reporting and misrecognition of sexual violence against men.<sup>69</sup> According to Dolan (2014),

as with efforts to document sexual violence against women and girls, precise evidence of prevalence against males is hard to come by in most conflict-affected countries. Internalised feelings of shame, fear of stigmatisation, and legal frameworks and social services that do not recognise men as victims prevent the majority of victims from reporting to the authorities (2).

Assessing the frequency of sexual violence against men proves difficult "because of the extreme stigma attached to sexual abuse of males and the ensuring reluctance to report such rapes" (and other cases of sexual violence) (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010: 45). As noted by a UNOCHA report (2008), "the stigma attached explains the extreme reluctance of many men and boys to report cases" (2). A subsequent effect of this under- or non-reporting (RLP 2013) is the "invisibility of men and boys as

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<sup>69</sup> This discussion proves necessary for contextualizing my examination of the extent of male-directed sexual violence in Northern Uganda in Chapter 5.3.

(non-)survivors of sexual violence" (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010: 45) and a systematic silencing of such violence (Lewis 2014).

Caution is required, however, not to over-simplify the potential reasons for the under- and non-reporting of sexual violence against men, and to restrain from indirectly and implicitly blaming victims for the difficulty of establishing more concrete numbers. A study by RLP proposes three potential reasons, in addition to fear and stigma, for why male survivors may be hesitant to report sexual violations committed against them: (1) potential fear of arrest on suspicion or accusation of being homosexual; (2) victims may be discouraged from reporting sexual violence because they fear social and familial ostracism; (3) lack of access to services. In fact, it is not only the problem of non-reporting, but also the ways in which sexual violations of men are treated and considered from the outside, which constitute a profound challenge in determining the extent of such violence (RLP 2013; Sorensen 2011). For instance, victims' reluctance to report their sexual victimizations may often be "exacerbated by legislations that criminalize homosexual acts, and make survivors reluctant to report abuse in fear of prosecution" (Brankamp 2015: 16).<sup>70</sup>

External service-providers and those working with male survivors, such as NGO representatives, medical professionals or social workers, furthermore often do not recognize the physical and psychological signs of male-directed sexual violence, or simply do not acknowledge the empirical reality of sexual violence against men (RLP 2013; Dolan 2014). Sorensen (2011) notes that a

major factor in the failure to identify male victims is the slowness of institutions to recognize that male victims even exist [...]. Health-care workers have internalized stereotypical gender roles to the extent that they are unable to recognize male victims of sexual violence who seek help or may even dismiss them (16-17).<sup>71</sup>

The complications of categorizing and coding sexual violence against men, as elaborated above and illustrated by Leiby's work (2009), constitute another factor contributing to the difficulty of measuring such violence. Even when we possess data

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<sup>70</sup> Such is the case in Northern Uganda, as evidenced elsewhere in this dissertation (Chapters 5 and 6), where same-sexual acts are criminalized and outlawed, punishable by life in prison (see Bompani and Valois 2017)

<sup>71</sup> As I demonstrate in Chapter 5.4.3, these dynamics reflect the experiences of some Acholi male survivors.

and figures, as in the studies cited above, caution is nevertheless required. Methodologies vary across studies, or may be in-transparent or unknown (Cohen, Hoover Green and Wood 2013; Peterman, Palermo, Cohen and Hoover Green 2011). As with sexual violence in general, the factual numbers of male-directed sexual violence may be higher than reported (Cohen, Hoover Green and Wood 2013).

### **3.5. Explanatory Frameworks**

Proceeding from this overview on prevalence, this section scrutinizes different explanations for the occurrence of conflict-related sexual violence against men put forward in the literature. I argue that specific explanations for sexual violence against men are not yet well established, frequently lacking empirically-grounded data, but that explanatory frameworks for the occurrence of sexual violence in general, most of which focus on female survivors, provide important insight into understanding these dynamics. Possessing a critical and sustained understanding of different attempts to explain conflict-related sexual violence, in general and against men in particular, proves necessary to determine the context-specific dynamics of such violence in Northern Uganda in Chapter 5.<sup>72</sup>

Scholars such as Leiby (2006) or Cohen (2016) remind us that mono-causal explanatory models in general cannot sufficiently account for the occurrence of sexual violence. A "phenomenon as complex as wartime rape may have any number of conceivable causes" (Cohen 2016: 3) and "even within the same conflict, sexual violence can serve multiple functions in different contexts and at different points in time" (Leiby 2006: 445). Reiterating that there rarely ever is one all-encompassing explanation to account for the dynamics of conflict-related sexual violence (Cohen 2016; Wood 2009) is fundamentally important for this discussion of explanatory frameworks as utilized throughout existing research.

Furthermore, explaining the occurrence of sexual violence is inherently difficult without sufficient empirical data from the perpetrators' perspectives. Cohen (2016) argues that to "determine the motivations for rape - and whether it is being used strategically - researchers must study the perpetrators themselves" (20). Despite a few noteworthy exceptions (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009; Cohen 2016), there is

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<sup>72</sup> Explaining the occurrence and dynamics of male-directed sexual violence in Acholiland, in turn, is fundamentally important for understanding male survivors' experiences, how such violence impacts upon their gender identities (Chapter 6), and how this shapes their justice needs (Chapters 7, 8).

a persistent lack of data on perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence (Franklin 2004; Horvath and Woodhams 2013). This has been referred to as a "theoretical vacuum" in the literature (Henry, Ward, and Hirshberg 2004: 535). For male-directed sexual violence specifically, data from the perpetrators' sides is entirely absent, hence constituting a prevailing lacuna in the literature.<sup>73</sup> Within this lack of perpetrator-centric data, by analyzing patterns of sexual violence against men from the outside, and from a survivors' point of view, we can nevertheless begin to unravel and unpack some of the collective dynamics and infer arguments and explanations regarding potential causes (Leiby 2009: 460).

When trying to explain conflict-related sexual violence against men, important insights can be gained from feminist scholarship on the gendered dynamics of conflict and violence (see Chapters 1.3; 3.2) and on sexual violence (Alison 2007; Skjelsbaek 2001; Wood 2006b). Much of the previous writing on male-directed sexual violence, however, fails to sufficiently engage with prevalent theorizing on sexual and gender-based violence in general, as well as with feminist debates specifically. Feminist legal scholar Nancy Dowd (2010) notes that generally, feminist theorizing fails to sufficiently incorporate masculinities, while masculinities scholarship in turn lacks a sufficient interrogation of feminist considerations and arguments (also see Hamber 2016).<sup>74</sup> Linking existing (feminist) theoretical explanations for the gendered dynamics of conflict to the related phenomenon of conflict-related sexual violence against men, as I do throughout this dissertation, can help to develop a more holistic understanding of these forms of violence. Sjoberg's (2016) layered theoretical exploration of gender subordination and Eriksson Baaz and Stern's work on sexual violence (2009, 2013), constitute novel contributions for bridging this divide.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Conducting such research would obviously imply various ethical, methodological and practical challenges and difficulties.

<sup>74</sup> Dowd (2008) argues that "what masculinities has to offer feminist theory, in general, is the enrichment, contextualization and refinement of theory, as well as making men simply visible! What feminism has to offer masculinities theory, is a set of tools to address much more strongly inequality, subordination and how to shift from power-over to power-with" (231).

<sup>75</sup> The work by Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2009, 2010, 2013) and Laura Sjoberg (2016) in particular will thus extensively be referred to throughout this section.

### 3.5.1. Dominant Explanatory Frameworks for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

I proceed by reviewing dominant explanatory frameworks for understanding conflict-related sexual violence in general, the majority of which concentrate on such violence against women. This broad overview sets the frame for specifically examining explanations for the occurrence of male-directed sexual violence further below.

Existing explanations for conflict-related sexual violence are manifold and diverse (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; Cohen 2013; Sivakumaran 2007; Wood 2013), although most dominant explanatory frameworks broadly classify the occurrence of such violence as either strategic or opportunistic, with respective subsidiary precisions (see Davies and True 2015; Cohen 2016; Wood 2014; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013). For Wood (2014), strategic sexual violence broadly refers to "instances of rape [and sexual violence] purposefully adopted in pursuit of organization objectives" (47), while opportunistic sexual violence is generally "carried out for private reasons rather than organization objectives" (*ibid.*). According to Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013), these two most common theoretical frameworks for explaining sexual violence during conflict can generally be categorized as 'the sexed' (opportunistic) and 'the gendered' (strategic) story respectively.

#### *The 'Sexed' Story*

In brief, the 'sexed story' proposes that conflict-related sexual violence can mostly be attributed to male perpetrators' unfulfilled sexual needs in times of war and conflict (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013). This explanation is based upon the (essentialist) assumption "that sexual release is a 'natural' need for men, exacerbated by the stress of battle conditions" (Sjoberg 2016: 188). The 'sexed story' (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013) and the related 'opportunistic rape argument' (Wood 2014) have received considerable scholarly attention in relation to sexual violence against women (Heinemann 2011; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; Wood 2006; Sanin and Wood 2014).<sup>76</sup> While the opportunism variable has been found to be of explanatory value in

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<sup>76</sup> The opportunistic rape argument has not yet been considered to explain the occurrence of male-directed sexual violence during conflict settings, in part because of its heteronormative foundations and expectations (see Chapter 5.3).

some cases (Cohen 2016: 3), it has been heavily critiqued, as being sex-essentialist, deterministic and for de-politicizing rape in conflict (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013: 19). The sexed story is also inherently heteronormative and relies on constrained categorizations of male perpetrators and female victims, and thus "overly negative towards men" (*ibid.*). Sjoberg (2016) therefore argues that purely relying on the 'sexed story' is problematic, because it takes away an explicit gender analysis and thus over-simplifies the complexity of conflict-related sexual violence (188).

### ***The 'Gendered Story'***

By centralizing a gender lens, the 'gendered story' departs from this sex essentialism. Focusing on gender and militarization, this explanatory frame "sheds light on the power of gender ideologies as underlying rationales for the 'use of' sexual violence in armed conflict" (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013: 19). According to the gendered story, sexual violence in conflict constitutes an effective instrument of humiliation and intimidation in a gendered manifestation (*ibid.*). For Sjoberg (2016), "understanding sexual violence in war and conflict as gendered adds explanatory value not only for that sexual violence, but for understandings of war and gender" (188).

It is the gendered story which primarily "underwrites the dominant framing of conflict-related sexual violence" (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013: 15) throughout contemporary scholarship (see Kirby 2013). The majority of existing studies hence suggest that wartime sexual violence is primarily strategic and systematic, often portrayed as a weapon of war, aimed at punishing and intimidating its victims, primarily through gendered subordination and disempowerment, as shown further below (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; Sjoberg 2016; Alison 2007). Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013), however, offer a compelling critique of the dominant narrative of sexual violence as a 'weapon of war', which too unilaterally frames sexual violence along gendered storylines, ignoring the intricacy and over-simplifying the complexity of gendered conflict dynamics more broadly. In concert with Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013), Sjoberg (2016) underscores that the 'gendered story' fosters the essentializing and misleading assumption of male perpetrators and female victims (also see Carpenter 2002; Dolan 2015).

Gendered scholarship on conflict and security in general also increasingly seems to write out and neglect sexuality and sexual acts from discourses around sexual violence, instead exclusively focusing on gender (as separated from sex), while uncritically and unilaterally adopting the strategic 'rape as a weapon of war' narrative. Such is particularly the case for discussions around male-directed sexual violence (Dolan 2014), which solely center around gender as linked to dominance and control (Alison 2007) without seriously considering how sexuality and sex are organically connected to power, and thus to gender, as convincingly demonstrated by Foucault (1978) in *the History of Sexuality*. While gender must be the cornerstone of any analysis of sexual violence (Davies and True 2015), sexuality and sex similarly need to be foregrounded in any such discussions (Enloe 2004).

In light of this critique, it is therefore insufficient to exclusively rely on either of these dominant explanatory frameworks in illuminating wartime sexual violence. The dichotomizing distinction between sexual violence as *either* opportunistic (the 'sexed story') *or* strategic (the 'gendered story') is often essentializing and does not accommodate the actual complexity of lived realities in (post-)conflict zones. Frequently, sexual violence in any given case can only be explained by an alternating combination of the sexed and the gendered story, which often are more closely connected than commonly suggested. As emphasized by Leiby (2009b), "even with the same case, sexual violence can be used for multiple purposes" (465).

Against this background, Sjoberg (2016) argues that conflict-related sexual violence "is sexed, sexual and gendered, and all of these observations matter in theorizing it" (139). With my analysis in Chapter 6, I further illuminate this assessment. Undoubtedly, conflict-related sexual violence is a multifaceted phenomenon (Leiby 2009; Henry, Ward and Hirshberg 2004), and henceforth any mono-causal explanatory model is unlikely to account for its occurrence in all its variation and polyvalent complexity (see Wood 2014).

### **3.5.2. Explaining Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Men**

Building upon these most common theoretical frameworks for wartime sexual violence in general, I now specifically scrutinize explanations for conflict-related sexual violence against men in particular. Existing scholarship demonstrates strong links and synergies between male- and female-directed sexual violence (Alison 2007;

Skjelsbaek 2001; Clark 2014), as "both are part of the gendered dimension of [...] armed conflict" (UN OCHA 2008: 4). Comparable to gendered violence against women, male-directed sexual violence frequently is an expression of aggression, power and dominance over the enemy (Dolan 2014). Stemple (2011) argues that sexual violence (and in particular rape) is closely related to the exercise of domination and subjugation of its victims, frequently in a gendered manifestation. Responding to common misrepresentations of conflict-related sexual violence as only (or almost exclusively) affecting women (see Leatherman 2011), Stemple (2011) posits that sexual violence and rape "is almost always about gender, which is not to say it is always about women" (825). These dynamics are effectively captured under the 'gendered story' and compatible with the 'rape as a weapon of war' argument (see Chapter 3.5.1; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013).

### ***Sexual Violence Against Men: 'Emasculate' and 'Feminize'***

Throughout the literature, a consensus prevails that "ideas about masculinity directly underpin the use of sexual violence against men" (Wright 2014: 14). Alison (2007) thus argues that an accurate understanding of the empirical reality of conflict-related sexual violence requires theoretical models to take into account the manifold ways in which masculinities feature in wartime sexual violence, and their intersections with constructions of ethnicity (also see Skjelsbaek 2001). Alison (2007) suggests that sexual violence against men "is no less gendered nor any less ethnicized" (81) than sexual violence against women. According to such arguments, sexual violence against men is a highly masculinized act of male-to-male communication, asserting the perpetrators' dominant (hyper-)masculinities while subordinating and compromising the victims' masculinities.

A dominant narrative thus explains sexual violence against men as aiming to 'emasculate' and 'feminize' (or 'homo-sexualize') its victims. Surveying the relevant literature reveals that the vast majority of existing studies suggests that 'emasculating' victims is among the most common, if not *the* single most prevalent, driver of male-directed sexual violence (see UNOCHA 2008; Sivakumaran 2007).<sup>77</sup> Lewis (2014) indeed attests that "the emasculation of the victim is widely recognized as being a

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<sup>77</sup> Based upon a literature review covering the most influential studies on the topic up to 2008, a UN OCHA report (2008) suggests that emasculating the victim is among the most prominently desired effects of the perpetrators of such crimes.



motivation for the perpetration of male-directed sexual violence" (211). Deriving from a socially constructed premise that masculinities are incompatible with vulnerabilities (Connell 1995; Dolan 2002; Gilson 2016), and that manhood is irreconcilable with victimhood (Connell 2002), sexual violence is theoretically considered to compromise men in their masculine identities by foregrounding their gendered and sexual vulnerabilities.

Meger (2015) argues that when a perpetrator forcibly over-powers another man, he perpetrator humiliates the victim by subordinating him to the status of a woman or a homosexual man within a patriarchal gender hierarchy (see Sivakumaran 2007). The male victim is therefore considered subordinate to the perpetrator, who embodies a superior form of masculinity. Meger (2016a) argues that in this way, "sexual violence is useful for delineating between 'man' and 'other', with anything not approximating the social ideals of masculinity falling in the latter category" (179). The seeming paradox that male-on-male sexual acts only seem to cast "a taint of homosexuality" (Sivakumaran 2005) on the victim, but not on the perpetrator can be explained through the gendered dimension of penetration within hetero-normative societies. As explained more fully and context-specifically in Chapter 6.2.2, it is the act of penetration that communicates, performs and transfers power and dominance in a gendered manifestation (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016). Alison (2007) further argues that sexual violence in particular appears to be the preferred form of violence, because it mostly clearly communicates gendered dominance, power and control, and thus demonstrates emasculation and feminization, while also highlighting the perceived hyper-masculinity of the perpetrator (see Sorensen 2011).<sup>78</sup> Sexual violence against men within theaters of war can thus constitute a highly communicative (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010, 2013) and performative (Butler 1990) act.

Cases of male-directed sexual violence hence often (intentionally or unintentionally) comprise survivors' masculine identities (Lewis 2014). Current scholarship, however, thus far has failed to critically engage with the conceptualization and associated terminologies of 'emasculation' and 'feminization'. Based upon feminist critiques

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<sup>78</sup> In cases of connected sexual harms where men are forced to watch (female) members of their communities being raped (Coulter 2009), the symbolic and perceived emasculation of male victims may occur through demonstrating their inability to protect their families and communities, and thereby their incapability to fulfill socially constructed gender roles and expectations closely tied to masculinities.

(Enloe 2004; Cockburn 1989; Sjoberg 2016; Peterson 2010), in Chapter 6 I argue that these concepts and terms are problematic from a human rights standpoint and a gender equality prism, while furthermore not being reflective of the highly fluid and non-static character of survivors' lived realities (see Chapter 6.5).<sup>79</sup> At the same time, mono-causal generalizations which universally portray the 'emasculatation' of victims as the sole or primary driver of male-directed sexual violence are often too reductionist and over-simplistic, failing to account for the messy complexities of conflict and violence (Davies and True 2015). Crucially, conflict-related sexual violence needs to be analyzed context-specifically and circumstantially, rooted in conflict-related micro-dynamics of politics and violence, as well as localized gender constructions.<sup>80</sup>

Previous attempts of explaining male-directed sexual violence during wartime thus primarily pursued the 'gendered story', arguing that sexual violence is often a strategic weapon of war (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; see Sivakumaran 2007). On the other hand, scholarship on sexual violence against men thus far turned a blind eye to the 'sexed story' (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013) to explain such violence. This neglect of opportunism as a potential variable for understanding the occurrence and dynamics of male-directed sexual violence largely derives from heteronormative and heterosexual assumptions. Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013) indeed claim that the 'sexed story' "is organized around notions of male heterosexuality [...]" (19). According to such presumptions, same-sex violations can simply not be assumed to be opportunistic, but must instead serve a strategic and military objective, and male combatants cannot be expected to rape other men for sexual gratification.

### ***Wartime Sexual Violence as Gender Subordination***

Taking into account many of the above articulated arguments and critiques, Sjoberg's (2016) recent application of gender subordination theories (also see Sjoberg and Via 2010; Peterson 2010) to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones advances an understanding of the dynamics of such violence, including against men, in all its complexities. Framing sexual violence as a form of hierarchical gendered

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<sup>79</sup> In Chapter 6 I elaborate this critique in more detail and alternatively propose the framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016) to conceptualize these dynamics.

<sup>80</sup> Towards this end, this dissertation aims to offer an analysis of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda profoundly grounded within its specific social and cultural context.

subordination, Sjoberg's (2016) work accounts for male survivors and female perpetrators alongside the conventionally adopted categories of male victimizers and female victims, thereby moving "beyond prewritten assumptions and scripts" (Boesten 2014: 112) of wartime sexual violence.<sup>81</sup> Effectively, gender subordination must be conceptualized as placement along gendered hierarchies by way of undermining victims' gendered and sexual identities (see Sjoberg and Via 2010; Sjoberg 2016). To cite Sjoberg (2016),

gender subordination is fundamentally a power relationship in which those perceived as female/feminine are made less powerful than those perceived as masculine/male. This power relationship extends through the perceived possession of gendered traits and the gendering of perceived behaviors and actions (39).

Crimes of sexual violence against men thus communicate a power relationship between the victimized, who in Sjoberg's (2016) terms are "perceived as female/feminine" and "less powerful", and the perpetrator, or "those perceived as masculine/male" (39). These dynamics adeptly apply to male rape, as one particular form of sexual violence against men amongst many (see Chapter 3.3; Alison 2007; Carpenter 2006).

Despite these previous attempts of explaining sexual violence against men, however, existing research has not yet provided sufficient explanatory models for amplifying the occurrence and complex dynamics of male-directed sexual violence across localities. The overview of existing explanatory framework in this section similarly showed that there is not one unilaterally applicable explanation to account for the occurrence of sexual violence, whether perpetrated against women or men (Cohen 2016; Leiby 2009).

### **3.6. Conclusion**

This chapter critically reviewed the limited yet nevertheless growing body of literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men, thereby situating this dissertation within existing research. I have demonstrated that such forms of violence occur more frequently than popularly assumed (Sivakumaran 2007), and argued that

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<sup>81</sup> Sjoberg's work is utilized and explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

these crimes are closely linked to gendered patterns and dimensions of violence more broadly (Stemple 2011).

Throughout this Chapter, I also argued that much previous research remains largely descriptive and under-theorized, and at the same time often lacks an empirical basis. While recent years have experienced a shift towards including men and boys into dominant political conceptualizations of wartime sexual violence (Touquet and Gorris 2016), male survivors nevertheless remain only of peripheral interest to policy-making and scholarship alike (Grey and Shepherd 2012). As a result, much remains unknown about the forms, extent and causes of sexual violence against men, and male survivors lived realities are particularly under-explored. Situated within these broader epistemological gaps, in this dissertation I integrate empirical data from the perspectives of male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda. This sheds important contextual light on male survivors' lived realities and carries implications for the growing body of literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men.

While wartime sexual violence against men thus remains under-researched, specific intersections between sexual violence against men and other areas remain especially poorly explored. The nexus between such violence against men and transitional justice is one specific area that warrants further study, as addressed by this dissertation. The following chapter now turns towards research on transitional justice, as the dissertation's other primary unit of analysis.

## Chapter 4: Theorizing Justice in Transition

*"There are different kinds of justice" - Desmond Tutu (1996)*

### 4.1. Introduction

Establishing a theorization of justice within the context of transition is necessary to analyze what 'justice' means for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Northern Uganda. In this chapter, I therefore conceptualize the broadened understanding of justice to be utilized throughout this study, thereby setting the theoretical framework for the analysis. This conceptualization is rooted in a critical review of dominant trends and developments in transitional justice scholarship, and moves beyond legalistic and institutionalized conceptions of justice towards a thicker understanding of transitional justice (McEvoy 2008).<sup>82</sup> A masculinities lens is applied throughout the chapter, to unpack the gendered dynamics and masculinities quotients of different justice concepts. My theorizing about justice in transition throughout this chapter is situated at the mezzo-level, tailored to the context of the research project, but also implies wider utility for transitional justice from a masculinities perspective.

Concurring with Hamber (2007, 2016), I evidence a significant gap in the growing literature on gender and transitional justice that does not sufficiently engage with masculinities. Applying feminist critique in combination with a masculinities lens to transitional justice,<sup>83</sup> I show that these processes are inherently masculine (Brown and Ní Aoláin 2015) and heteronormative (Bueno-Hansen 2015). While transitional justice is often by, for and about men (see O'Rourke 2016), it frequently also ignores certain gendered conflict-related experiences of men, and especially male sexual harms often fall outside the heteronormative frameworks dominating these processes.

By unpacking multiple conceptualizations of justice through a masculinities lens, I also show that for many men impacted by conflict, justice can often depend on a

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<sup>82</sup> By critically engaging with the inter- and multidisciplinary literature on transitional justice, I primarily draw from political science, law and anthropology.

<sup>83</sup> Previous studies have utilized either feminist critique and a feminism lens (see O'Rourke 2013; Buckley-Zistel and Stanley 2013; Ní Aoláin et al. 2011; Ní Aoláin 2012; Bell and O'Rourke 2007) or, less frequently, a masculinities perspective (see Hamber 2007, 2015; Cahn and Ní Aoláin 2010; Theidon 2009) in relation to transitional justice. A combination of feminist critique coupled with a masculinities lens has been applied less frequently to the study of transitional justice.

restoration of and return to idealized, patriarchal and heteronormative gender orders and identities (MacKenzie and Foster 2017). Quests for gender-sensitive transitional justice for men therefore can risk undoing prior advancements regarding gender parity in transitional justice. Further advancing theorizing on justice from a masculinities perspective, I argue that emancipating transitional justice from the bonds of its paradigmatic institutionalism<sup>84</sup> implies the potential to engage with these gendered harms, blind-spots and tensions in a more inclusive and transparent way. Such an approach can advance a gender-inclusive and harm-centric re-conceptualization of transitional justice in response to male-directed sexual violence, offering important theoretical and conceptual contributions for transitional justice theorizing through a masculinities lens.

I commence in part 2 by setting out a thickened conception of justice, accompanied by a critical overview of the plurality of justice systems, in Northern Uganda and beyond. Part 3 conceptualizes and defines transitional justice, by investigating recent trends and developments of the field, with particular attention to informal, non-institutionalized and localized processes. Part 4 then explores the differing conceptions of justice that constitute the leitmotifs for holistic transitional justice processes. Part 5 examines the gendered dynamics of transitional justice through a masculinities lens, and part 6 investigates the local and contextual meaning of justice in Acholiland.<sup>85</sup>

## **4.2 A Thickened Conception of Justice**

In this section, I conceptualize the thickened understanding of justice to be utilized throughout this dissertation. Drawing on research from legal anthropology and socio-legal studies, and referring to debates about legal pluralism and the plurality of justice systems, this section also evidences the (co-)existence of multiple ideas, understandings and conceptualizations of justice.

Across time and space, but especially in Western(-ized) societies, "justice is often understood as a short-cut for 'law' or 'legal'" (Bell et al. 2007: 86), equated with

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<sup>84</sup> In this capacity, I am borrowing from Sharp's (2014a) use of terminology in writing about 'emancipating transitional justice from the bonds of the paradigmatic transition'.

<sup>85</sup> By conceptualizing justice, transitional justice and the contextual the meaning of justice in Acholiland in this order, I thus move from the general (justice) to the more specific (transitional justice) to the locally specific (justice in Acholiland).

judicial means carried out by institutions (see Sen 2009; Rawls 1971; Kant 1785).<sup>86</sup> Such conceptions of justice are focused on institutionalism and liberal values, and "demand the presence of a sovereign state" (Sen 2017: 262). Amartya Sen (2009) previously categorized this understanding of justice as 'transcendental institutionalism'. Despite the prevalence and dominance of these conceptions and assumptions, however, scholars across disciplines, and especially in anthropology, have foregrounded the co-existence of multiple culturally- and temporally-contingent understandings of justice (Merry 1988; Nader 1965; Betts 2007; MacDonald and Allen 2015).

Against this background, I utilize a broadened and thickened understanding of justice. I recognize that "justice is an amorphous and elusive concept that can be interpreted and experienced in a myriad of ways" (Kent 2012: 33). As argued by Kent (2012), justice "may have multiple socially embedded meanings", thus constituting a "contested concept that is constantly being negotiated within particular social and political constraints" (43). My understanding of justice and the framework of this study stem from the observation that there is not one universal concept of justice that could be applied across or within time and space (see MacDonald and Allen 2015; Tamanaha 2008).<sup>87</sup> Rather than a distinct goal, justice thus ultimately exists more as a 'notion', which "will probably never have a universal meaning" (MacDonald and Allen 2015: 289).<sup>88</sup> This co-existence of diverse understandings of justice can in part be attributed to the fact that demands for justice depend on survivors' prior subjective and diverse experiences of injustice and harm (see Douzinas 2000; Kent 2012; Teitel 2000; Sen 2017). Any quest and desire for justice was likely preceded by acts and episodes of injustices. At the same time, interpretations of justice are far from static, but able to evolve and change across time and space (Robins 2011).

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<sup>86</sup> Although generalized, I posit that when most people (most likely across different cultures and spaces, but certainly in western(ized) contexts) think of justice, they think of a courtroom as the respective locality, punitive measures as the appropriate process, and a criminal conviction as the adequate outcome.

<sup>87</sup> Despite recognizing the plurality of meanings and systems of justice, however, I likewise remain wary of an entirely relativist position on justice. While different social and cultural context inevitably shape understandings of justice (Nader 1965), one cannot assume there to be as many justice systems as there are societies and people.

<sup>88</sup> The danger of such a broadened, widened and inclusive conceptualization, however, is that it risks conflating justice with other socio-economic and political needs, requirements and processes. As emphasized by Sally Engle Merry (1988), a very broad definition of justice "runs the risk of defining legal systems so broadly that all social control forms are included" (870).

Applying these broad theoretical reflections to transitional and post-conflict contexts, throughout this dissertation I likewise utilize a widened understanding of transitional justice, as developed in Chapter 4.3. Transitional justice as understood throughout this dissertation is characterized by diverse conceptions of justice and accommodating a myriad of political, social and economic processes in a holistic sense (see Boraine 2006), beyond legalism and institutionalism (McEvoy 2007; Robins 2011). I therefore situate my analysis in broadened and thickened notions of transitional justice as developed by Nickson and Braithwaite (2013) and McEvoy (2008) respectively. Such a thicker understanding (McEvoy 2008) moves beyond legalistic and institutionalized measures, and can instead be accommodative of "the rich, multilayered and dynamic nature of transitional justice" (Kent 2012: 205).

#### **4.2.1. Legal Pluralism - in Uganda and Beyond**

The above attested co-existence of multiple justice conceptions and understandings across and within societies (see MacDonald and Allen 2015) can be poignantly illustrated by debates about legal pluralism and the plurality of justice systems (see Merry 1988; Clarke 2009; Fuller 1994; Moore 2000). Throughout this section, I introduce the defining criteria of legal pluralism and subsequently illustrate their applicability to the case of Northern Uganda. In making my arguments, I am primarily guided by legal anthropology scholarship, which as a research field has paid most attention to legal pluralism (see Nader 1965; Merry 1988; Tamanaha 2007).<sup>89</sup>

Merry (1988) articulates legal pluralism as "a situation in which two or more legal systems coexist in the same social field" (870). Legal plurality is conventionally found where religious laws play a role in the justice system (Clarke 2009), and/or where a "legacy of colonial interaction between indigenous and European law" persists (Betts 2007: 740). According to Merry (1988), virtually every society is legally plural, whether or not it had a colonial past. MacDonald and Allen (2015) further reiterate that globally, the majority of fragile or conflict-ridden societies are "regulated in a multifarious domain or assorted and diverse rule systems and

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<sup>89</sup> I nevertheless recognize that thorough theorizing about justice cannot be done without reference to research in the fields of law and socio-legal studies (see Wheeler 2000). At the same time, I also refer to scholars who are strongly influenced by political science, human rights scholarship and legal methods (see Clarke 2009; Betts 2007; MacDonald and Allen 2015; MacDonald 2014). My theorizing throughout this section (as well as in the dissertation at large) is thus largely inter-disciplinary.



institutions" (283), including multiple justice systems and approaches. Indeed, "jurisdictional complexity" (*ibid.*) is hardly unique, neither contemporarily nor historically (Tamanaha 2007).

Such is the case in Acholiland, where multiple traditions of justice dating from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times (co-)exist (MacDonald 2014: Branch 2012). Prior to colonization, what can broadly be referred to as different justice systems operated horizontally, in that they were "regulated by a series of relationships, rather than by a state" (MacDonald 2014: 71; see Atkinson 1994). During this period, wrongdoing and crimes were primarily dealt with in 'open courts', "held at different levels of social organization (household, sub-clan, clan, inter-clan and inter-tribal) according to the nature of the conflict (land, domestic conflict, arson, murder)" (Baines 2005: 16). MacDonald (2014) observes that "there was not one centre of authority, but many, and their relationships were overlapping" (71).<sup>90</sup>

This plurality of different justice systems in Acholiland in many ways was further intensified by the British colonial administration, which installed a form of Western legalism on top of pre-existing forms of social ordering and structuring (Finnström 2008). The first colonial administrator of Gulu district, J.P. Postlethwaite (1947), wrote that "we meted out justice according to our own ideas without having [...] much real appreciation of natives' own traditions" (37). As noted by Baines (2005), however, "the introduction of the court system by colonialists did not appear to wholly undermine traditional court systems" (16). During the colonial period (Girling 1960; Atkinson 1994; p'Bitek 1986), "the development of law as an institution, and the enforcement of a legal apparatus became a key means of social control" (MacDonald 2014: 75). Consequently, what "marked this period was the imposition of a new power system conjugated to a new legal culture" (*ibid.*), and traditional courts and system of justice were slowly subordinated to a state-administered system (Baines 2005).

In the contemporary context, this plurality of systems of authority and administering justice in many ways continues to prevail. In Northern Uganda, for instance, the government's Local Council (LC) system (Hopwood 2015; Porter 2012) co-exists alongside traditional systems organized by clan and village structures (Finnström

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<sup>90</sup> The translation and meaning of justice in Acholiland, as prevalent during colonial and contemporary times, is discussed in Chapter 4.6.

2008; Atkinson 1994). In the contemporary context, people and communities in Acholiland therefore engage with different justice systems, which range from informal and local, often situated within and along village and clan structures, to the official, such as the LC system. These diverse ideas and systems of justice, including traditional approaches, are illuminated in more detail in later parts of this Chapter (see 4.3.3). The introduction of the LC system, however, significantly undermined the role and authority of elders and traditional practices, which were consequently subjugated to state-level processes (Baines 2005).

Although the facilitation of a plurality of justice systems is often attributed to colonization, in Northern Uganda (see Finnström 2008) as indeed elsewhere (see Betts 2007), colonialism *per se* is often not solely attributed with the introduction of legal pluralism, which often existed before (Merry 1988). In fact, plural justice systems existed across a variety of societies and geographies prior to colonialism already (Tamanaha 2007). While colonialism is not exclusively responsible for the introduction of legal pluralism, Euro-centric and colonial approaches to justice are nevertheless at the core of a tendency to subjugate indigenous and local processes (Tamanaha 2007). Theorizing about the plurality of justice systems is also characterized by a strong tendency to portray indigenous or traditional and non-state or informal law as necessarily subordinate to the official, state-driven and western form of justice (MacDonald and Allen 2015). This tendency of marginalizing the local can be observed in relation to localized justice vis-à-vis institutionalized and official transitional justice processes, as discussed in more depth below.

This debate about legal pluralism shows that across and within societies, in general and in Northern Uganda, diverse conceptualizations of justice can co-exist, resulting in a plurality of different justice systems and ideas. Therefore, justice cannot necessarily be unanimously understood and applied,<sup>91</sup> and there is sufficient conceptual and empirical ground to challenge the ubiquitous utility of one universally applicable and relativist conception of justice that resonates across and

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<sup>91</sup> See Ghai (2000) for a theoretical debate about universalism and relativism in relation to justice (also see Betts 2007).

within time and space.<sup>92</sup> This understanding proves fundamentally important for developing a broadened and thickened conception of justice in transition.

### **4.3. Transitional Justice**

Moving from a general focus on justice to a specific examination of justice in transition after violent conflict and mass atrocities, in this section I illuminate and conceptualize the understanding of transitional justice as utilized in this dissertation. Drawing upon literature from various disciplines,<sup>93</sup> I likewise trace the development and recent trends of the field and study of transitional justice, arguing that transitional justice expanded from its exceptional origins to become a growing research field on its own (see Bell 2009). Particular attention is paid to informal, non-institutionalized localized transitional justice (see Martin 2016; Shaw and Waldorf 2010). I argue that formalized and un-institutionalized justice conceptions are characterized by strongly pronounced masculinities quotients, to be foregrounded in this section via the application of a masculinities lens.

#### **4.3.1. Defining and Conceptualizing Transitional Justice**

Applied to transitions after armed conflicts, dictatorship or authoritarian regimes, justice in response to past mass violence and extensive human rights violations is commonly labeled transitional justice (Teitel 2000; Elster 2004; Nagy 2008). As argued by Webber (2012), "transitional justice is about situations in which a society is moving from a state of injustice to justice [...]" (98) in the aftermath of atrocities. According to the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG 2004), transitional justice can be defined as,

a full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. These may include both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, with differing levels of international involvement (or none at all) and individual prosecutions, reparations, truth-seeking, institutional reform, vetting and dismissals, or a combination thereof (4).

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<sup>92</sup> For a competing and admittedly dominant viewpoint, according to which justice is primarily understood in judicial and institutionalized terms, see Rawls' influential *Theory of Justice* (1971). Also see Sen (2009) and the earlier and classical literature on theories of justice (i.e. Kant 1784).

<sup>93</sup> Including political science, law and anthropology.

While the multiple meanings of justice inherent to such processes are unpacked further below (see Chapter 4.4), *transition* can be understood as the process of moving, or transitioning, from conflict to peace and non-violence, and/or from authoritarian regimes and dictatorships to a democratic state. I acknowledge, however, that these transition processes rarely take on the linear character they are theorized to have (see below; Hamber 2016). At the same time, transitional justice frequently takes shape in post-conflict contexts, as well as during situations of active hostilities, where arguably no notable transition has materialized, exposing and questioning the specificity of the *transitional* nature of such processes (see Posner and Vermeule 2004).

In referring to both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, the UNSG's (2004) understanding of transitional justice extends the scope of some other definitions. Earlier definitions primarily emerged from a legal standpoint (see Robins 2011) and often placed a strong emphasis on judicial means to facilitate transitions and deliver justice (see Ní Aoláin and Rooney 2007; Gready and Robins 2014) at the expense of non- or quasi-judicial and non-institutionalized processes (see Guthrey 2015; Kent 2014). As observed by Mallinder (2014), "the growth of transitional justice was strongly influenced by international human rights law and international legal scholars and jurists. This means that transitional justice programs were often highly legalistic [...]" (7).

In adopting the UN's definition, I nevertheless emphasize that the suggested catalogue of prosecutions, reparations and various other institutionalized mechanisms should not be understood as an exhaustive list, but rather as an indication of potential measures. Instead, and depending on context, a variety of non-institutionalized and 'unrecognizable' transitional justice measures (Martin 2016)<sup>94</sup> can often likewise be included. I therefore highlight that the holistic study of justice in transition should also entail consideration for, and a critical examination of, 'everyday' practices of how individuals and communities reconstruct their lives and re-build relationships and societies in the aftermath of armed conflicts (see Das 2007; Das and Kleinman

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<sup>94</sup> Martin (2016) conceptualizes unrecognizable transitional justice measures broadly as "processes outside the official scope and discourse" (401). According to Martin, unrecognizable mechanisms "refer to the means and processes of conflict-affected communities 'engaging in pre-existing communal structures, such as religious activities, as well as restoring their physical and social livelihood'" (*ibid.*: 405).

2001; Perera 2001).<sup>95</sup> Borrowing from Richmond (2010), the 'everyday' refers to "a space in which local individuals and communities live and develop political strategies in their local environment [...]. It is representative of the deeper local-local [...] engaging with needs, rights, custom, individual, community, agency and mobilization in political terms" (6).

In light with these concerns, Mallinder (2014) observes that "as the field of transitional justice has developed, informal approaches to justice have attracted increasing attention as a way of redressing past crimes" (4). The field has therefore moved beyond its legalistic origins and conceptions, to similarly include a variety of additional non-judicial, measures and means. As emphasized by Erin Baines (2010), "justice is a social project among many others, and the study of justice should include the various strategies employed by the war-affected populations to deal with the legacies of mass violence" (7).<sup>96</sup> Instead of exclusively examining what Das and Kleinman (2001) refer to as "grand narratives of forgiveness and redemption" (16), this growing body of 'remaking a world' scholarship (also see Perera 2001; Das 2007; Rosenoff-Gauvin 2013) is increasingly attentive to local and individual experiences of coming to terms with human rights abuses and transitioning out of conflict. In light of this broadened angle, I find Alcala and Baines' (2012) broad conceptualization of transitional justice particularly helpful as it refers to,

the many individual and collective ways in which people pursue mundane activities and practices to restore the basic fabrics of meaningful social relations, negotiations or re-creative protective mechanisms and provide some sense of continuity in their lives and sense of self in relation to others in the aftermath of violence and conflict (386).

Thus far, however, this growing body of literature has paid only scant attention to the gendered dynamics and implications of non-institutionalized practices of attaining justice in transitional and post-conflict settings, as explored more fully below.

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<sup>95</sup> In extending the scope of transitional justice processes and by including numerous non-institutionalized and 'everyday processes', I acknowledge the difficulty and complexity of further stretching an already over-burdened concept that arguably already faces an expectation management problem.

<sup>96</sup> This conception of justice as a social project (Baines 2010) proves instrumental for understanding my analysis in Chapters 7 and 8.

### 4.3.2. The Expansion of Transitional Justice

According to McEvoy (2007), the concept of transitional justice in many ways experienced its own transition, emerging from its exceptionalist origins towards becoming a normalized, institutionalized, mainstreamed and globalized/internationalized practice.<sup>97</sup> In this section, I evidence this rapid and significant expansion of transitional justice. I emphasize how the current state of the art of existing transitional justice research and practice includes different levels of involvement from the local to the international (see Shaw and Waldorf 2010; Teitel 2015). For Hansen (2014), this growth and expansion of transitional justice can be classified in horizontal and vertical terms, setting the framework for this section's discussion.

#### *Horizontal Expansions of Transitional Justice*

Horizontal expansions capture the application of justice processes to diverse transitional contexts (Hansen 2014). This implies that transitional justice processes are applied to a wide range of situations, including not only armed conflicts but also post-authoritarian and post-dictatorial transitions (see Elster 2003; Kritz 1995).<sup>98</sup> Not only the points of departure, however, but also the end-goals of transitional justice processes are increasingly recognized as being more diverse than initially assumed (see Hansen 2014). Constituting an integral component of wider post-conflict peace- and nation-building processes (Sriram 2007; Paris 2004), transitional justice discourses are heavily guided by "many of the assumptions of the liberal state-building project" (Kent 2012: 30). Inherent to these assumptions is a dominant belief that by fostering democratic institutions and (neo-)liberal market economies, states and societies emerging out of conflict will gradually transition into liberal, peaceful and stable democracies (*ibid.*; see Arthur 2009; Kostic 2012). As identified by Moon

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<sup>97</sup> For a good and comprehensive historiography and genealogy of the development of transitional justice and its different waves, see: Teitel (2003); Sharp (2013); Elster (2004). Ruti Teitel's genealogy of transitional justice shows that it was only around the end of the 20th century that the term 'transitional justice' was coined, but that similar processes and developments existed before. Although attempts of dealing with past conflict-related atrocities existed prior to the Second World War, in particular the post-WWII Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals are largely seen as constitutive embodiments of the first phase of transitional justice (Teitel 2003). During the 1970s and 1980s, democratization processes and political developments likewise constitute transitional justice processes (Ester 2003; Sharp 2013).

<sup>98</sup> Increasingly, transitional justice processes are also meted out in situations of on-going conflicts and violence, as for instance demonstrated by the International Criminal Court's (ICC) indictments in Northern Uganda whilst the conflict was still on-going, resulting in tensions between *peace versus justice* (see Schulz 2011).

(2008), transitions are therefore often assumed to equate continuous progress from conflict to peace, authoritarianism to political/procedural democracy, and illiberal to liberal regimes, among others (also see Nagy 2008).

Although recent years have increasingly emancipated transitional justice from the bonds of the paradigmatic transition (Sharp 2014a; see Carothers 2002), such processes are nevertheless still expected to lineally promote democratization, human rights, the rule of law and peace-building (see Lambourne 2009), often within neo-liberal frameworks (see Bliesemann de Guevara and Kostic 2017). I concur with Hamber (2016), however, in arguing that "[i]n reality, these processes are seldom linear, and reconstruction involves many processes that are not always captured by phrases such as peacebuilding or transitional justice" (8). Instead, the complex, unsettling and fluid nature of transitional justice processes across time and space evidences that "dealing with the past is a continuing process, rather than confined to a specific 'transitional' period" (Kent 2012: 205).

Such is evidently the case in Northern Uganda, where the Juba Peace Agreement of 2008, although not finally signed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), was widely assumed to set in motion a justice and reconstruction process to be characterized by a linear transition from protracted war to peace (see Okello, Dolan et al. 2012). Despite the proposal and involvement of different transitional justice mechanisms - such as the International Crimes Division (ICD) (see MacDonald and Porter 2016), investigations by the ICC (see Apuuli 2004) and a draft national transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014)<sup>99</sup> - the reality on the ground a decade later looks anything but linear.<sup>100</sup>

### ***Expansion towards Gendered Violence***

As part of this horizontal expansion, transitional justice is also becoming increasingly attentive to the gender dynamics of political transitions (O'Rourke 2016), including gendered harms (Ní Aoláin 2012) and crimes of sexual and gender-

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<sup>99</sup> A more critical examination of Uganda's draft transitional justice policy follows in Chapters 7.2 and 8, where I examine the lack of implementation and a persistent gender-blindness of the policy.

<sup>100</sup> As I identify in Chapter 5.5, amongst the war-affected population in Northern Uganda, the current situation cannot simplistically and universally be characterized as 'peace' or 'post-conflict', therefore lending sufficient empirical ground to contest assumptions of a linear transition in this context.

based violence (against women) (Henry 2009).<sup>101</sup> Even though there continues to be a "capture problem with gendered harms" (Ní Aoláin 2012: 20) in transitional justice, the past two decades of transitional justice development "have radically altered the treatment of gendered violence [...]" (Franke 2006: 816). As postulated in the Introduction, however, gendered approaches to transitional justice are dominated by a strong focus on sexual violence and an emphasis on retributive justice and criminal prosecutions (Campbell 2004, 2007; Henry 2009), coupled with a violation-centric lens and thin conceptions of gendered harms. This arguably resulted in rather limited and exclusionary gender justice developments (Buckley-Zistel 2013), marginalizing quasi-judicial or non-institutionalized justice measures, and overshadowing gendered inequalities towards women (Ross 2003) as well as sexual and gender-based violence against men and boys (Dolan 2014; RLP 2013; Schulz 2015).

This focus of the literature on prosecutorial means is reflective of, and has arguably been influenced by, a sustained focus on conflict-related sexual violence in the international criminal justice arena (Buckley-Zistel and Stanley 2012). Progressive developments by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR) in the 1990's contributed towards the recognition of crimes of rape and sexual violence as constitutive of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide (Askin 1997; Mibenge 2013). Throughout the literature, these two ad-hoc Tribunals are credited with the responsibility for the contemporary evolution of jurisprudence on sexual violence within the context of armed conflict (Haffajee 2006; O'Byrne 2011), and are seen as having established landmark and precedence cases concerning sexual violence (de Londras 2009). These developments have influenced the jurisdiction and operation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which operates in gender-neutral language and extensively focuses on gendered violence, with many cases before the Court including charges of sexual and gender-based violence (Chappell 2014).

While most cases at the ad-hoc Tribunals and the ICC focus on gendered and sexualized violence against women (Cohen and Nordas 2014; Studzinsky 2012), very few proceedings have involved cases of sexual violence against men (RLP 2013),

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<sup>101</sup> In developing his framework and argument, Hansen (2014) does not specifically refer to the inclusion of and responding to sexual and gender-based violence as part of the horizontal expansion.



most notably so at the ICTY (Sivakumaran 2013; see Prosecutor v Tadic).<sup>102</sup> The only two times that male sexual violence and rape was explicitly charged and tried under international criminal law was in the ICTY's Prosecutor v Ranko Cesic case, and in the ICC's case against Jean Pierre Bemba.<sup>103</sup> This limited body of jurisprudence and case law led Sivakumaran (2013) to attest that "the actual prosecutions of male sexual violence have been rather disappointing" (87).

### ***Vertical Expansions of Transitional Justice***

In addition to this horizontal broadening, Hansen (2014) also conceptualizes vertical expansions, referring to the increased importance of different actors and the implementation of transitional justice processes at different levels, from the local to the international. Most of the earlier transitional justice literature arguably originated from discussions on how emerging democracies in Latin America and Eastern Europe should address human rights abuses (Teitel 2003; Arthur 2009), viewing States to possess primary decision-making capacities (Kritz 1995). Contemporary transitional justice discourses, however, view the State and its associated (masculine) actors as only one among a variety of protagonists in holistic attempts to facilitate transitions (Subotic 2012). As part of this vertical expansion, the implementation of transitional justice processes has therefore been diversified and extended to a variety of actors from the local to the international (Hansen 2014)

The growing involvement of different United Nations agencies in designing transitional justice measures, the establishment of a permanent ICC and international think tanks such as the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) symbolize the globalization of the field (Subotic 2012; Teitel 2015). Sharp (2015) posits that this institutionalization and internationalization of transitional justice is "buttressed by an emerging industry of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), expert consultants, [and] dedicated staff at the UN [...]" (153). In Northern Uganda, for instance, UN Women played a crucial role in assisting with the process of

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<sup>102</sup> In contrast, the ICTR, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) or the Extraordinary Chambers at the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) have been far less active in investigating and prosecuting sexual violence against men (Schulz 2015).

<sup>103</sup> For the few other cases involving the sexual victimization of men at the ICTY, the majority of forceful acts were not specifically charged as sexual violence, but instead as torture. At the ICC, the Court's investigation into the Kenyan situation similarly included evidence suggesting that men were subjected to SGBV. Although included by the OTP under the rubric of 'other forms of sexual violence', however, Judges at the Court excluded these male-directed sexual crimes, arguing that they do not constitute sexual violence (Schulz 2015).

drafting earlier versions of the proposed transitional justice policy, while the ICC's investigations shaped the design and operation of national accountability mechanisms, such as the International Crimes Division (ICD) (McDonald and Porter 2016). I criticize, however, that the growing involvement of external international actors in facilitating political transitions across the world increasingly results in a standardized template and 'one-size-fit-all' approach of transitional justice (see Gready 2005; Orentlicher 2007), where a pre-determined set of mechanisms is universally applied to diverse contexts.<sup>104</sup>

### **4.3.3. Localizing Transitional Justice**

At the same time, the vertical expansion of transitional justice facilitated an increasing participation and importance of local actors, including communities of victims and survivors (Lundy and McGovern 2008; Robins 2011), as well as local processes, such as grass-roots measures or traditional justice rituals (Huyse 2008; Kent 2012; Quinn 2007; Baines 2010; Senier 2008). What throughout the literature is described as 'localizing transitional justice' (Shaw and Waldorf 2010) therefore incorporates local norms, mechanisms and ceremonies into transitional justice practice, and aims to ensure that the voices, concerns and needs of local actors and populations are integrated into transitional justice process (McEvoy and McGregor 2008; Roht-Arriaza and Mariezcurrena 2006). Localizing transitional justice can also include that operational mechanisms engage in outreach with affected communities on the local level (see Schulz 2017b).

The United Nations (UN) has previously recognized the benefits of customary local practices for larger transitional justice processes. The UN Secretary General's (UNSG) report on transitional justice from 2004 emphasizes that "due regard must be given to indigenous and informal traditions for administering justice [...] and to help them to continue their often vital role to do so in conformity with both international standards and local traditions" (18). The report therefore acknowledges the potential of locally-embedded and culturally-specific mechanisms, emphasizes "the importance of local consultation, ownership and leadership, and recognizes the role of local mechanisms" (Anyeko et al. 2012: 110).

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<sup>104</sup> Even though some international actors in recent years are arguably moving away from this toolkit approach, a standardized template application of justice in transition nevertheless takes place across many post-conflict and transitional societies (MacDonald 2014).

Shaw and Waldorf (2010) note that the field's shift to focus on the local can largely be seen as a result of a growing disconnection between international norms and processes with local needs, priorities and conceptions of justice (see Shaw 2007; Millar 2011). International or national institutionalized processes are often inaccessible for conflict-affected communities (see Perera 2001) and/or disconnected from local belief systems and conceptions (Baines 2007), as well as from victims' and survivors' needs and priorities (Robins 2009). Local customary or traditional justice systems are therefore often portrayed as better accessible and more culturally and socially legitimate for community-based or rural populations (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008). At the same time, however, and as noted by Waldorf and Shaw (2010), local justice processes recently received "increasing attention as *complements* to national or international processes" (4) [emphasis added].

The fact that informal and customary justice is primarily conceptualized as complementary (*ibid.*) to national or international procedures implies that local justice is often treated as subordinate to processes at other levels (see Teitel 2015). Transitional justice on the local level, by local actors and through local processes is therefore often only seen as a second-best option in comparison to measures carried out by formalized institutions on the national or international level (Sharp 2014). Goodale (2006) as well as Shaw and Waldorf (2010) criticize that within the context of peace-building, developmental assistance and transitional justice, the 'local' is situated at the bottom of a hierarchy of different spatial levels. Through such a hierarchical level-based definition of the 'local', Shaw and Waldorf (2010) argue, we risk de-politicizing locality and "constructing it as a residual category characterized by separation [from the global, national, regional, etc.]" (6; see Richmond 2011). As a result of this de-politicization, locality is often equated with the absence of modernity (Nordstrom 1997) and is consequentially downplayed in terms of its value and importance (MacGinty and Richmond 2013).<sup>105</sup> The infantilization of the local

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<sup>105</sup> On the downplay of the local with regards to knowledge, understanding and ideas throughout Western-centric discourses in general, anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom in 1997 convincingly wrote: "To relegate theory, philosophy, and epistemology to academia is to say that quests into the nature of thinking is a privileged scholarly process. The implications of this are legion: scholarly literature is replete with words like 'popular knowledge', 'indigenous traditions of thought', 'local belief systems', and 'local-level philosophies' that refer to the production of knowledge in ethnographic settings. When did we begin to distinguish theoretical from popular knowledge, garnishing the former for ourselves, the researcher, and assigning the latter to those we study? By applying such arbitrary distinctions, we imply that the locals (read 'natives') do not theorize unless they are themselves academics. We also imply that somehow epistemology is not popular knowledge about knowledge, but something 'better',

therefore results in a marginalization of the experiences and perspectives of the people within this residual space, which most often constitute the vast majority of conflict-affected communities.

Applying these broad reflections and observations to the specific context of this study, traditional and localized justice processes have taken on a prominent role in discourses around dealing with the legacy of the conflict in Northern Uganda (Anyeko et al. 2012; Baines 2005; Victor 2007). Different informal measures, such as for instance the ritual of *mato oput*<sup>106</sup> (Baines 2007), are widely presented as locally appropriate alternatives to formalized and top-down administered means, and especially to the punitive approach of the International Criminal Court (Baines 2005). Civil society representatives and cultural and religious leaders in particular have emerged as prominent advocates of this approach, arguing that these measures are culturally-sensitive and best equipped to deal with the complex nature of the conflict and the post-conflict situation (see Anyeko et al. 2012). In a different way than formalized justice processes, those mechanisms help to bring conflicting parties together, based on restorative principles (Baines 2005), with the aim of promoting reconciliation, forgiveness and restoration, rather than revenge or retribution (Finnström 2010). The primary objective of these traditional approaches is thus to reconstitute social relationships and harmony (Porter 2013).<sup>107</sup>

Different rituals and ceremonies have long existed in Acholiland, often deeply rooted in Acholi cosmology (see Girling 1960; p'Bitek 1986, Gingyera-Pinyewa 1992), and were employed to deal primarily with inter-personal and inter-clan disputes (Finnström 2008). Within the context of the armed conflict, however, they were also modified and applied to deal with conflict-related harms (Quinn 2007). Nevertheless,

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even though countless studies on the sociology of knowledge demonstrate the degree to which our 'scientific frameworks' are rooted in personal and social process" (Nordstrom 1997: 27).

Nordstrom's general observations about the downplay of the local, in relation to epistemology and knowledge production also very much relate and apply to conceptualizations of locality throughout human rights discourses, and have immediate implications for the 'local' within transitional justice processes (Shaw and Waldorf 2010).

<sup>106</sup> *Mato Oput* broadly translates as 'drinking (*mato*) of the bitter root (*oput*)'. As poignantly summarized by Anyeko et al. (2012), *mato oput* is a voluntary process that begins with negotiations and mediation between the families involved, to develop trust and establish the truth. Thereafter negotiations are held about the amount of compensation to be paid. "The practice [...] concludes with a ceremony and feast during which clan representatives share a drink made of sheep's blood and roots from the bitter *oput* plant, symbolizing the washing away of bitterness between the clans" (111).

<sup>107</sup> To illustrate these primary aims of traditional justice in Northern Uganda, a 2005 report by the Liu Institute on Acholi approaches to justice is entitled *Roco Wat I Acholi*, which can be translated as the restoration of relationships (Baines 2005: 2).

criticism and skepticism has been raised regarding the potential applicability of traditional Acholi ceremonies in dealing with mass atrocities (Victor 2007). Allen (2006) problematizes the politicization of these practices, arguing that they are merely an 'invention of tradition', while Branch (2008) claims that especially the practice of *mato oput* is affected by neo-colonial interventions (also see Anyeko et al. 2012). A report from 2005 furthermore found that the majority of Acholi elders interviewed for the study did not think that these processes were feasible in the context of the armed conflict (Baines 2005). This potential inapplicability arises, in part, because traditional cultural beliefs and practices in Northern Uganda were heavily impacted by the conflict, and in particular by the widespread forced displacement (Dolan 2009). Furthermore, different rituals, such as *mato oput* require the active participation of both the victim and perpetrator (and often their families/clans) (see Quinn 2007), which in the context of protracted armed conflict, characterized by abduction, high rates of killings and large-scale displacement, is often difficult to achieve (Baines 2007). And lastly, during the conflict and in the post-conflict period, "many Elders argued that poverty limited their ability to carry out rituals" (Baines 2005: 13), which required compensational payments and the sacrifice of animals, for instance.

Although local and informal processes in Acholiland are often portrayed "as a homogenous set of practices" (Lonergan 2012: 3), there is in fact vastly heterogeneous variation, belying any rigid standardized approach to informal justice across the Acholi sub-region. Instead, each mechanism, ceremony and ritual has its distinct and unique purpose, ranging from reintegration to cleansing and reconciliation (Baines 2005; Victor 2007), "and the suitability of a particular practice depends on the nature of the violation that occurred" (Lonergan 2012: 3). My own observations furthermore demonstrate that the requirements and specificities of different practices likewise vary between clans and geographical localities (*Field notes, 6-7 February 2016*).

At the same time, in many transitional and post-conflict societies, including in Northern Uganda, survivor communities expressed dissatisfaction over how, to what extent, and with what level of communal involvement localized transitional justice has been carried out (Okello, Dolan et al. 2012; Pham and Vinck 2010; Simangan

2017). This dissatisfaction and the corresponding critique frequently take on a gendered dimension, which I explore in the following sub-section.

### ***Gendering Localized Transitional Justice***

While undoubtedly implying sustained recognition of local norms, and while moving closer to conflict-affected communities' lived realities and needs (Das and Kleinmann 2001; Robins 2011), the increasing localization of transitional justice processes also raises gendered challenges (Boege 2006). In many conflict-affected societies, frequently characterized by masculine, patriarchal and heteronormative constructions of gender (Dolan 2011), a turn to the local simultaneously often implies a geographical move toward, and a reinforcement of, largely masculinized, homo-phobic and sexually conservative societal contexts.

On the one hand, the local positioning of transitional justice processes within heteronormative and patriarchal societal settings carries implications and raises challenges for the participation of and roles played by women and youths. For instance, Boege (2006) describes how women and girls are often excluded from the administration of these measures, and only "become the subjects of these decisions" (16). In Northern Uganda, "the most visible proponents of traditional justice and the most visible participants in the ceremonies are male elders" (Lonergan 2012: 1). Within this socio-cultural context, male elders commonly embody and represent a particularly dominant form of normative hegemonic Acholi masculinity (see Chapter 6.4; Dolan 2002), which can be expected to influence their perceptions of and their involvement in these localized justice processes.

Furthermore, in Acholiland, traditional processes are predominantly employed to deal with spiritual possession in relation to the conflict (Quinn 2007; Baines 2010). Within this context, women are commonly assumed to be more susceptible to spirit possession (Finnström 2008; Baines 2010). Excluding women from active roles in the planning and implementation of traditional processes, and instead only passively subjecting them, can hence be expected to further sustain women's inferior position within these processes as well as in patriarchal societal structures more broadly (see Boege 2006).<sup>108</sup> With regard to the application of justice, Baines (2007)

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<sup>108</sup> This gendered distribution of power and influence during these processes was evident during a local, traditional cleansing ceremony that I attended in Amuru district in February 2016. Male elders

consequentially argues that "it is unlikely that *mato oput* will be able to reflect [women's] interests without significant modification (107).

In addition to gendered participation and involvement, a localization of justice likewise carries implications for the treatment of gendered conflict-related experiences, including women's structural inequalities and crimes of sexual violence against women and men. In many conflict-affected societies, a localization of transitional justice measures likely implies that taboo and culturally stigmatized crimes of sexual violence against men fall outside the realm and framework of local means of delivering justice, which are heavily underpinned by heteronormative and patriarchal assumptions.

Applied to the context of Acholiland, traditional mechanisms are inapplicable to remedy male rape for a variety of reasons. Different traditional justice practices in Acholi culture, such as *mato oput*, are primarily used to respond to killings (Lonergan 2012), and on a spiritual dimension deal with *cen*, which "are generally considered to be the spirits of people who died" (Porter 2013: 99). As emphasized by a key-informant, however, crimes of male rape were mostly separated from killings and commonly did not involve *cen*, and thus fall outside the framework of what these different practices are usually tasked to deal with (*Interview, 6 February 2016*). Other rituals are primarily used to re-integrate and cleanse returning combatants (see Baines 2005; Lonergan 2012), and are therefore equally inapplicable to deal with male rape.

Most rituals, and certainly *mato oput*, also require the active participation and involvement of perpetrators to achieve their theorized reconciliatory and healing potential (see Quinn 2007). Since the perpetrators' identities in this context remain largely unknown (see Chapter 5.3), the possibility of traditional rituals appears largely improbable. The potential applicability of local justice processes in response to male rape is further impeded by the ethnic identities of the majority of perpetrators, most of whom are non-Acholi (see Chapter 5.3). As highlighted by Baines (2007), it is unclear whether traditional accountability mechanisms "would be enforced when either the victim or offender is non-Acholi" (106). Further, informal

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organized and executed the ceremony, and while women were cleansed, other female community members cooked food and served drinks for the other participants (*Field notes, 7 February 2016*). Women were completely excluded from the administrative sides and decision-making elements, and instead only passively subjected to the process, or served in a domestic capacity.

justice measures often take place in communal settings, which means that male survivors' experiences would be publicly revealed to their communities and families. Since many male survivors do not want their experiences to be known on the local level, in fear of social stigmatization and exclusion, traditional rituals within a publicized community setting thus do not constitute a viable option for sexual violence survivors to seek redress (see Alldén 2007; Bronéus 2008).

There consequentially appears to be little space for localized and traditional justice processes to redress conflict-related harms in a gender-sensitive manner. Instead, there are convincing theoretical and empirical grounds to assume that the lack of consideration for sexual and gender-based violence by localized justice processes, coupled with the absence of active female participation, will translate into further marginalization of these gendered experiences and harms. This, in turn, carries negative implications with regard to the potential of these justice processes to deliver gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice, including for male sexual harms. Employing a gender lens towards the increasing localization of transitional justice processes thus demonstrates that despite certain advantages, especially for rural communities (Shaw and Waldorf 2010), such gains often imply crucial gendered compromises. These reflections on the gendered workings of localized justice processes are mirrored by wider developments within the transitional justice field, as further evidenced below (see Chapter 4.5).

#### **4.4. Unpacking Multiple Conceptions of 'Justice'**

Building upon the foundations of a widened approach to justice, I now proceed to unpack the multiple conceptions of justice that play out in transitions. I specifically examine retributive, restorative, reparative and transformative justice as crucial conceptual leitmotifs for broader transitional justice processes.<sup>109</sup> I also investigate a recognition-theoretical idea of justice (see Honneth 1995; Haldemann 2009), given the relevance of this framework for my analysis. These diverse conceptions of justice are important for elucidating and analyzing the viewpoints of Acholi male sexual violence survivors on justice (Chapters 7 and 8). In each of the separate sections, I

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<sup>109</sup> In addition to these conceptions, other understandings of justice present within the field of transitional justice include: distributive justice (Mani 2002; Hamber 2009) reciprocal justice (Guthrey 2016) or political justice (see Lambourne 2013).



utilize a gendered lens, to evidence the pronounced masculinity quotients of different justice conceptions.

Despite this (co-)existence of multiple justice conceptions, however, the 'justice' in transitional justice is still predominantly equated with judicial mechanisms (see Ní Aoláin and Rooney 2007; Robins 2011; Bell et al. 2007). Throughout dominant transitional justice scholarship, retributive justice and criminal accountability are often seen as the imperative from which other notions of justice merely follow (see Aukerman 2002; Fletcher and Weinstein 2002).<sup>110</sup> Despite this strong legalistic focus primarily employed by lawyers and political scientists (see Bell et al. 2007), scholars positioned across different disciplinary backgrounds nevertheless employ varying understandings of transitional justice, and in particular anthropologists utilize broader justice conceptions (see Hinton 2011; Shaw and Waldorf 2010; Baines 2010). In light of this, recent years have witnessed attempts to thicken (McEvoy 2007), deepen and broaden (Nickson and Braithwaite 2014) transitional justice beyond prosecutorial means (Robins 2011), to arrive at what Boraine terms 'holistic' justice (2006). In employing a broadened conception of justice in transition, composed of different conceptions and processes, I position myself within such a 'thicker' understanding (McEvoy 2008), which opens the way for "a more grounded, locally embedded, approach to transitional justice" (Kent 2012. 206). Deriving from these premises, I proceed to discuss different justice theories in the sub-sections below.

#### **4.4.1. Retributive Justice**

Retributive justice views punitive accountability and legal punishment of perpetrators as an adequate and necessary response to crimes (see Mani 2002; Perry 2006). Martha Minow (1998) maintains that "retribution motivates punishment out of fairness to those who have been wronged and reflects a belief that wrongdoers deserve blame and punishment in direct proportion<sup>111</sup> to the harm inflicted (11). According to retributive conceptions, prosecutions and criminal proceedings are

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<sup>110</sup> Recalling my earlier assessment that across time and space, justice is often predominantly equated with judicial means (see Chapter 4.2; see Sen 2009), this representation of criminal trials as the ultimate benchmark of justice during transition (see Fletcher and Weinstein 2002) lends support to Posner and Vermeule's (2004) claim that the trends of "transitional justice is continuous with ordinary justice" (764).

<sup>111</sup> Applying proportional punishment to mass atrocities, however, is inherently difficult and often not realistic, therefore complicating judicial proceedings during times of transitions.

therefore theorized to deliver justice by punishing perpetrators, denouncing wrongdoing and recognizing the victims' suffering. Hamber (2009) argues that "[f]or most victims, there is something seemingly satisfying about retribution and, more specifically, about punishment" (119). Claims for retributive justice thus often stem directly from conflict-affected communities themselves, and not only externally from theorists.

A key problem closely associated with "thinking about justice in the retributive sense [...] means that the courts, at least in most societies, become the expected vehicle for the delivery of justice" (Hamber 2009: 120). A wealth of empirical research, however, has illuminated numerous legal, political and technical shortcomings of the court systems, many of which are heavily gendered (Henry 2009; Smart 1989). Previous research has also demonstrated victims' dissatisfaction with criminal justice processes, in which many survivors feel 'footnoted' in the proceedings (Zehr and Mika 2003), silenced (Kelsall and Stepakoff 2007), deprived of any agency (Mertus 2004) and re-victimized (Franke 2006). This critique prominently applies to judicial processes for crimes of sexual violence (Henry 2009), leading feminist scholars to critically question whether punitive justice, primarily in the form of national and international criminal tribunals, can constitute adequate means to deal with gender-based violence (Otto 2009; Engle 2005; Henry 2009).

From a gender perspective, critical legal feminism has evidenced the masculine character of the law (see MacKinnon 1983) and of retributive justice systems, which excludes women and privileges the interests of men (Smart 1989; Pateman 1989; West 1988). According to Collier (2010), the "masculinism of law's institutions and practices has been linked [...] to the reproduction of gendered and discriminatory beliefs and practices" (437) and therefore, the "law is accorded a particular place in the reproduction of gender relations" (433). This feminist critique, however, is primarily articulated by white and Western feminism, with few exceptions (Moyo 2012; Parshar 2016; Kapur 2013), thus potentially lacking an intersectional lens and wider applicability to the experiences of women in non-Western contexts (Ahmed 2016). Despite the arguably ethnocentric character of this critique, its observations regarding the masculine domination of the law nevertheless similarly apply to criminal justice systems in transitional settings (Charlesworth and Chinkin 2000). For instance, the international criminal justice arena "rest[s] upon and reproduces the

public/private divide of the domestic legal order and privilege[s] the state over individuals (O'Rourke 2013: 26).<sup>112</sup> Further, the predominant focus of international judicial proceedings to primarily redress civil and political rights obscures other conflict-related economic, social and cultural rights<sup>113</sup> and harms, many of which are heavily gendered (Buckley-Zistel and Stanley 2012). Since retributive justice within the context of transition is inherently based upon masculine traits, it is thus generally more responsive to men's experiences, and more accessible to men (Ní Aoláin and Turner 2007), though subject to intersectional variation (Hamber 2016; O'Rourke 2016).

At the same time, retributive justice systems are also inherently centered around notions of heteronormativity (Bueno-Hansen 2015), often precluding an engagement with violations falling outside this framework, including sexual violence against men (RLP 2013). This marginalization is evidenced by the fact that 67 states around the world criminalize men who were sexually violated, and that "90 per cent of men in conflict-affected countries are in situations where the law provides no protection for them if they become victims of sexual violence" (Dolan 2014: 6). Numerous judicial systems around the world, including in Uganda (see Chapter 8.3) define sexual violence in gender-exclusive terms, solely recognizing women as victims and thereby marginalizing male survivors (see Sorensen 2011). The masculine domination of justice systems therefore primarily privileges certain men and their (heteronormative-conforming) experiences, thereby marginalizing women alongside other men (Carpenter 2006).<sup>114</sup>

#### **4.4.2. Restorative Justice - A Relational Conception of Justice**

Throughout the transitional justice literature, restorative justice is often portrayed as a more victim-centered alternative to retributive justice (Kent 2012). Although no commonly accepted definition for the concept of restorative justice exists, and "there

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<sup>112</sup> This linearity and transferability of the masculine character of the law from non-transitional or 'ordinary' jurisprudential settings to transitional contexts illustrates and supports Posner's and Vermeule's (2004) claim of transitional justice resembling many of the dilemmas and shortcomings of ordinary justice.

<sup>113</sup> In the case of the Prosecutor v Al Mahdi, the ICC recently moved towards recognizing the destruction and violation of cultural property rights. See the 'Restoring Cultural Property' research project at Queen's University Belfast for more on cultural rights within the context of transitional justice.

<sup>114</sup> By and large, these reflections on the gendered workings of retributive justice highlight wider gendered dynamics of transitional justice from a masculinities perspective, as I elucidate in more detail in Chapter 4.5.

is no clear consensus on restorative justice principles" (Mallinder 2014: 145), a variety of guiding conceptual elements seem to be agreed upon throughout the relevant literature (*ibid.*; see Llewellyn and Philpott (2014a)).<sup>115</sup>

In contrast to retribution, restorative justice theories principally consider violence and crime as "a violation of people and relationships" (Zehr 2008: 4). Restorative justice is thus primarily about addressing "the range of harms that violence causes to human relationships [and] to restore relationships out of these variegated harms" (Llewellyn and Philpott 2014a: 4), rather than judicially punishing perpetrators (Mallinder 2014; Zehr and Mika 2003; Duff 2003). Llewellyn and Philpott (2014b) emphasize that a relational and restorative concept of justice is therefore distinct in its assumptions from globally dominant understandings that reflect liberal individualism, in that it begins "from a relational conception of people and the world they inhabit" (1). Mallinder (2014) also notes that "the aim of restorative justice should also be to reintegrate the offender rather than 'alienate and isolate' them from society" demonstrating that "the outcomes of restorative justice processes are 'forward looking'" (145).

Restorative justice processes likewise promote the involvement of numerous stakeholders affected by crimes, including victims, survivors and perpetrators, and at times their families (Llewellyn 2006: 91). This collaborative and inclusive approach, Mallinder (2014) argues, "contributes to the identification of harms and remedies that are not commonly discussed in formal justice processes" (146), such as for instance sexual and gendered violence, including against men. Llewellyn and Philpott (2014b) furthermore explain that "restorative justice does not literally aim to 'restore' relationships to some prior existing state", but that, "the commitment to restoration in restorative justice aspires to the conditions of human relationships that are needed for peaceful coexistence and within which individuals can flourish" (12).

Despite the increasing utilization of restorative justice to post-conflict and transitional settings, however, these linkages remain under-theorized (Mallinder 2014).<sup>116</sup> Throughout the transitional justice literature, restorative justice theories are

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<sup>115</sup> On a more structural level, existing scholarship is characterized by a tendency to assume a dichotomy between retributive and restorative justice, and to portray both as competing models (Betts 2007; see Palmer 2015; Clark and Kaufman 2009).

<sup>116</sup> Restorative justice examples from transitional and post-conflict contexts include traditional reconciliation rituals (see Huyse and Salter 2008), for instance in Northern Uganda (Victor 2007;

primarily applied to measures that seek to restore relations between victims/survivors and perpetrators, in order to ensure "that the conditions for wrongdoing are not replicated" (Llewellyn and Philpott 2014a: 4) in the future (also see Betts 2007; Roht-Arriaza and Marriezcurrena 2006). Restorative justice theories are less frequently utilized to understand how the process of re-establishing relationships among survivors and between survivors and their wider communities links to justice, a gap I seek to address with my application of a relational conception of justice in the context of survivors' support groups (see Chapter 7).

Partly in response to the gendered limitations of the retributive justice system (see above), restorative conceptions of justice have been portrayed as gender-sensitive alternatives (Zinsstag 2008; Brown et al. 2010), and are often assumed to be better equipped to transcend the gendered institutionalized barriers of the formalized retributive justice system (Kelly 1988). McGlynn et al. (2012) posit that from a survivors' perspective, "restorative justice may enable us to hear victim-survivors' stories more holistically, to give voice to the real harms of sexual offences [...] in a manner not possible in the conventional adversarial justice process" (213-4).

However, feminist critique also foregrounds certain gendered blind-spots and negative gendered effects of restorative justice processes, many of which apply to such processes within the context of transition. A growing body of feminist literature critically questions whether restorative justice processes are appropriate in dealing with sexual violence (see Lewis et al. 2001; Hudson 2002). For instance, scholars have argued that restorative justice "may trivialize violence against women, re-victimize the vulnerable and endanger the safety of victim-survivor" (McGlynn et al. 2012: 214), and that (especially female) victims can ever fully gain traction with (mostly masculine) perpetrators (Lewis et al. 2001). Throughout the restorative justice literature, however, gender-based violence is primarily understood as violence against women, thereby diverting attention from the potential of restorative practices to remedy male sexual harms in (post-)conflict settings.

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Quinn 2007), or Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) (Ross 2003a; Broneous 2008; Guthrey 2015).

#### 4.4.3. Reparative and Transformative Justice

Reparative and transformative conceptions of justice constitute additional crucial aspects of a broadened and thickened understanding of transitional justice (see Mani 2002; Lambourne 2014). Both of these conceptions are particularly relevant for understanding male survivors' viewpoints on reparations (see Chapter 8). Drawing on the conceptual linkages between reparative and transformative justice, these concepts are jointly discussed throughout this section.

##### *Reparative Justice*

Reparations, underpinned by reparative justice theories, are frequently portrayed to be among the few transitional justice efforts directly undertaken on behalf of survivors (see Fischer 2011). In practice and implementation, the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation (2005) list five components of reparations: (1) restitution; (2) compensation; (3) rehabilitation (including access to medical and psychological care); (4) satisfaction and; (5) guarantees of non-repetition. A growing body of transitional justice scholarship consequently focuses on reparative justice theories, and the conceptual linkages between reparations and justice (de Greiff 2008; Elster 2006; Hamber 2008; Villa-Vicencio 2014).<sup>117</sup> As de Greiff (2008) emphasizes, "the most general aim of a program of reparations is to do justice to victims" (6). According to the Greiff, especially recognition, alongside the achievement of civic trust and social solidarity, lies at the core of reparative justice. His analysis outlines that "these aims are simultaneously necessary conditions and consequences of justice" (*ibid.*). In this capacity, reparations intend to give due recognition to victims of human rights violations, while also aiming to generate civic trust amongst citizens and survivors, as well as between citizens and state institutions (Rubio-Marín and de Greiff 2007).

As further outlined by Hamber (2008), reparative justice seeks to establish some sort of "reparation, i.e. a psychological state in which [victims] feel adequate amends have been made" (1). It is therefore helpful to think about the aim of reparative justice as "making *reparation*, for what has been damaged, lost or destroyed" (*ibid.*:

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<sup>117</sup> In praxis, however, there are only very few examples for the (successful) implementation of reparative justice, thus evidencing a gap between theory and practice (see Laplante 2009).

6). Drawing from legal notions, reparations include efforts to "restore someone (or something) to the state it was before harm was done" (Hamber 2008: 4). Importantly, reparations not only imply material gains for survivors, but crucially "can be profoundly meaningful to victims or survivors at a psychological level" (*ibid.*: 8). Reparative measures symbolically represent redress, recognition and acknowledgement, including of individual suffering (Duggan et al. 2008). In this reading, reparations can be individual and/or collective, material and/or symbolic (Hamber and Palmary 2009) as well as pro- and retrospective (Fischer 2011). Reparations hence imply the potential to significantly contribute to processes of healing, coping with bereavement and addressing the impact of violence on victims, thereby constituting integral elements of justice (Hamber 2008; de Greiff 2008). It is important to remember, however, that for individual victims, reparations are faced with the seeming impossible task of repairing the irreparable (Hamber 2000).

Despite its attested victim-centric dimensions, a masculinities perspective reveals certain gendered deficits of reparative justice theory and practical reparation measures. Conceptually, if reparative justice aims to *repair* conflict-related harms (see Hamber 2008), this can potentially translate into a reconstitution of survivors' pre-conflict status quo (see Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine 2015; de Greiff and Rubio-Marin 2007). In transitional and (post-)conflict settings, this can frequently imply a reparation of and return to hetero-normative and hetero-patriarchal societal structures, characterized by vast gendered inequalities and systematic discrimination of women (Pankhurst 2008; Goldblatt and Meintjes 1998). Reparative justice specifically for men can thus entail demands and desires for a restitution of hetero-patriarchy and privilege (MacKenzie and Foster 2017), where men performing hegemonic masculinities benefit in comparison to femininities and women, as well as to subordinate masculinities (see Ní Aoláin 2016).<sup>118</sup> While reparations can thus imply justice for some men, such measures and processes at the same time can carry negative implications for women (as well as for subordinated men) and thus for gender justice more broadly (Boesten and Wilding 2015).

Similarly, the process of repairing pre-conflict structures specifically for women can often imply a return to an unequal gendered *status quo ante* and to inferior female

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<sup>118</sup> These dynamics similarly arise in comparable ways for different forms of justice and for numerous transitional justice mechanisms (see Chapter 4.5).

subject positioning (Rubio-Marin and de Greiff 2007; Buckley-Zistel 2013). At times, women in active conflict zones take on traditionally masculine roles and thereby, at least temporarily, gain some sort of autonomy and economic independence (see Dietrich 2012; Alison 2004; Coulter 2009). If reparative justice aims to repair a pre-conflict *status quo ante* in the literal sense, however, then these relative gains can often be undone again in the post-conflict phase, implying negative consequences for women's equality and thus for gender justice (see Boesten 2014). Rubio-Marin and de Greiff (2007) therefore urge that reparations programs need to ensure that they do "not conform to or contribute to the entrenchment of pre-existing patterns of female land tenure, education or employment" (325). Further, most reparations programs globally primarily concentrate on civil and political rights, at the expense of other violations, including socio-economic rights, many of which are often heavily gendered (Rubio-Marin 2006), thereby mirroring gendered trends and shortcomings in transitional justice more broadly (O'Rourke 2013; Boesten and Wilding 2015). Challenges therefore remain to ensure that reparations can address the gendered manifestations of violence in their holistic occurrence, and that reparations can cement real gendered progress, in particular for conflict-affected women (Rubio-Marin and de Greiff 2006) as well as for male and female survivors of sexual violence (Ní Aoláin et al. 2015; Duggan et al. 2008).

### ***Transformative Justice***

Departing from these conceptual foundations, transformative justice is theorized to go an extra step by additionally addressing socio-economic injustices and structural inequalities in transitional settings (Gready and Robins 2014; Evans 2013). Based upon a widened and expanded conception of the methods, scope and aims of justice (Sharp 2013), transformative justice is therefore conceptualized to also tackle the root causes of conflicts (Evans 2013). According to Lambourne (2013), transformative justice pays attention to psychological processes and harms, survivors' socio-economic conditions as well as the overall societal, cultural and political contexts (see Gready 2010). Transformative justice thus entails a "shift in focus from the legal to the social and political, and from the state and institutions to communities and everyday concerns" (Gready and Robins 2014: 355). Transformative justice thus in many ways depends upon and resembles the centrally defining characters of the



broadened understanding of transitional justice as utilized throughout this dissertation.

Many of the underpinning components of transformative justice, such as a commitment to challenge unequal status quos and structural (often gendered) inequalities as well as a prioritization of socio-economic rights (see Sharp 2013), have long been advocated for by feminist scholars (see Cockburn 2001). In particular, feminists have previously argued that "for women, periods of societal transition have to aim for the transformation of the underlying inequalities that provided the conditions in which [their] specifically gendered harms were possible" (Boesten and Wilding 2015: 1). As outlined by Ní Aoláin (2016), transformation and transformative (gender) justice "depend on the redistribution of formal and informal power" (1) and a feminist "commitment to profoundly recalibrate power relationships" (*ibid.*; also see Enloe 2000).

However, transformative justice also raises various difficulties. Gready and Robins (2014) emphasize that one profound challenge is how to implement the ambitious project of transformative justice, and Waldorf observes only "limited efforts to put transformative transitional justice into practice" (2016: 6). Emerging critique similarly highlights various difficulties of stretching the conceptual boundaries of transitional to transformative justice, and of incorporating socio-economic violations and injustices under this umbrella-concept (see Andrieu 2012; Waldorf 2012). Previous research raised concern that 'ordinary' transitional justice already suffers from an expectation management problem (see Nickson and Braithwaite 2014), and that the even more ambitious project of transformative justice ultimately faces the challenge of delivering what it promises (Gready and Robins 2014). Waldorf (2016), for instance, argues that development actors would be better equipped to respond to these socio-economic harms which transformative justice sets out to redress (see Mani 2008).<sup>119</sup>

Applying a gender perspective to transformative justice reveals additional gendered complications and tensions.<sup>120</sup> In particular, addressing structural gendered inequalities (see Boesten and Wilding 2015) arguably requires compromises for and

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<sup>119</sup> For a discussion regarding the conceptual linkages and synergies between development and transitional justice, see Mani 2008.

<sup>120</sup> Many of these gendered dynamics mirror the gendered complications observed with regards to reparative justice, as discussed in the sub-section further above.

by men, who often have to give up power, privileges and resources for these transformations to materialize (see Ní Aoláin 2016). Such perceived compromises for men, however, can often result in a backlash with negative implications for women. Empirical research across a diversity of cases evidences how men who (perceive to) give up power and dominance often try to compensate for and re-gain their sense of (hegemonic) masculinities through other means, often by reverting to violence (Connell 2002; Swaine 2011; see Chapter 3.2). Processes of transformative gender justice, while initially aiming to transform unequal gender relations and redistribute gendered power and resources, can thus imply unintended consequences that do not challenge and transform, but may rather reinforce patriarchal power relationships and masculine benefits. To eventually overcome these tensions, a holistic and sustainable engagement with militarized masculinities in post-conflict contexts is inevitably needed (see Ashe 2012; Hamber 2010; Theidon 2009).

On the other hand, transformative justice for conflict-affected men, including for male survivors of sexual violence, is likely to imply demands for a cementation of (or a return to) masculine and hetero-patriarchal positions (see Chapter 4.5; MacKenzie and Foster 2017). I echo Ní Aoláin (2016) in emphasizing that "much of what has been conceived of as transformative in transitional settings fundamentally fails to take gender relations in account" (2). For transitional justice processes to be truly transformative, these gendered dynamics and implications need to be addressed and resolved, or else the benefits of transformative justice in a gendered manifestation, for gender equality and in response to gendered experiences will remain muted (see Ní Aoláin 2016).

#### **4.4.4. Recognition as Justice**

While different transitional justice dimensions are underpinned by diverse conceptions of justice, many mechanisms are similarly driven by the notion of recognition (de Greiff 2012). In this section, I theorize the conceptual linkages between recognition and justice and apply these to transitional justice processes (see Haldemann 2009; Honneth 1995). This focus on a recognition-theoretical conceptualization of justice is justified by the importance of such a framework for analyzing and understanding male survivors' viewpoints on justice as presented in

Chapters 7 and 8, many of which are strongly centered on recognition and acknowledgement.

Albeit distinct in its focus and application, a justice-recognition theory imply numerous conceptual linkages to other components of justice, such as acknowledgement (see Chapter 8.2; Vollhardt et al. 2014) or restorative justice theories (see Llewellyn and Philpott 2014). Despite these links, however, I treat acknowledgement and recognition as separate yet inter-dependent. As utilized throughout this dissertation, recognition is primarily situated at a societal level, involving recognition of survivors' human selves and their harmful experiences by outside actors and society.<sup>121</sup> Acknowledgement, although closely related to recognition, more centrally involves perpetrators (whether individual or institutional) directly acknowledging and admitting responsibilities for the crimes committed and for victims' suffering and harms (see Chapter 8.2).

Notwithstanding the prevalent links between justice and recognition (de Greiff 2012), however, there is a sizeable gap in the transitional justice literature regarding recognition-theoretical conceptions of justice. Despite Honneth's (1995, 2001) provision of a theoretical framework for understanding recognition as justice and Haldemann's application to transitional justice processes (2009), a systematic utilization of this theory has not yet transcended into transitional justice scholarship, with few exceptions (see Ní Aoláin 2012; Clark 2016).<sup>122</sup>

### ***A Recognition-Theoretical Conception of Justice***

For Haldemann (2009), recognition implies the possibility to constitute "'a different kind of justice', one that is less vindictive and state-centered and is more caring and responsive to human suffering" (678). The foundational parameter for a recognition-theoretical conception of justice is the assertion that physical injuries or pain as a result of violence are not the only nor even the most harmful or damaging injuries (Haldemann 2009). Instead, violence, humiliation and injustice can be measured as the absence or denial of (human) recognition (Honneth 1995). In *The Face of*

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<sup>121</sup> Societal recognition can also be potentially anonymous, recognizing the patterns of violations in general but not individual and specific victims.

<sup>122</sup> By utilizing, critiquing and further developing recognition-theoretical conceptions of justice in transitional settings in Chapter 7, I contribute towards addressing this gap. At the same time, however, related terms and concepts, such as acknowledgement, are more prevalent in the field of transitional justice, and related to reparative justice theories (see above).

*Injustice*, Judith Shklar (1990) points out that in addition to physical violence or socio-economic deprivation, it is equally unjust to make victims "feel the fury and resentment of being humiliated" (49). Taylor (1992) similarly outlines that "mis-recognition shows not just a lack of due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound [...]" (26) and that "[n]on-recognition [...] can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being" (*ibid.*: 25).

According to recognition-theoretical models of justice, reversing misrecognition and humiliation requires due recognition of survivors as human selves as well as of their harmful experiences (Haldemann 2009). Honneth (2004) further attests that the aim of a recognition-theoretical conception of justice must be the avoidance of (or response to) disrespect, humiliation and the denial of human recognition. The essence of justice as recognition is thus the reversal of the victims' or survivors' symbolic devaluation initially caused by violence and crimes (Haldemann 2009).

A recognition-theoretical conception of justice thereby aligns with a commitment to individualism, in which individual human beings occupy the ultimate focus of concern (Haldemann 2009: 679-80). In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth (1995) emphasizes the "human need for relations of mutual recognition (*Anerkennung*) as a precondition for achieving a distinctly sense of self realization" (Haldemann 2009: 683). For Honneth (1995), it is "only inter-subjectively - through experiencing recognition from others - that we can have any sense of self at all" (73). According to Haldemann (2009), these struggles for recognition should be at the center of social justice, thus constituting 'another kind of justice'. Recognition as a notion of justice is therefore essentially individual-centered (Ní Aoláin 2012), and justice is delivered through "giving due recognition to the pain and humiliation experienced by victims" (Haldemann 2009: 678).

By asking how justice and injustice look from the perspective of victims, such an approach to justice entails "a broader, more critical and sensitive outlook" (*ibid.*). Justice through recognition therefore qualifies as "a counter-balance to the perpetrator-centric focus on criminal courts" (Clark 2016: 69), and is quintessentially more victim-centric. Ní Aoláin (2012) rightfully observes that "recognition is therefore an essential component of redress" that "encourages us to look beyond law to a wider set of social and psychological processes" (22). In this capacity, a recognition-theoretical concept of justice aligns with the thesis' broadened

understanding of justice in transition beyond legalism (McEvoy 2007) and accommodative of a myriad of different components and processes.

Deriving from these theoretical premises, Haldemann (2009) applies Honneth's recognition-theoretical model to transitional justice processes. He outlines that "giving public recognition to the injured and their sense of injustice should be one of the central concerns of transitional justice [...]" (2009: 737). In this line of reasoning, Haldemann's (2009) work specifically examines truth (and reconciliation) commissions, reparations programs and criminal trials, scrutinizing their potential to deliver recognition, arguing that each of these mechanisms can do so in different ways.

From a gender perspective, Ní Aoláin (2012) argues that recognition-theoretical conceptions of justice enable us to "acknowledge the complexity of harms that comprise women's devalued social context [...]" (2012: 22-3) and therefore to advance feminist positioning in the field of transitional justice. Justice as recognition thus carries with it the potential "to get us to a more cohesive and positive feminist version of what justice in transition looks like" (*ibid.*: 24). Haldemann's (2009) outlook on violence also allows to make visible the compounded, layered and overlapping gendered harms, as experienced by both women and men, which are often neglected and made invisible by "the binary quality of legal analysis" (Ní Aoláin 2012: 21) and by discussions around violence and justice more generally (Engle 2013; Otto 2009). To this end, a recognition-theoretical conception of justice is utilized for the analysis in Chapter 7, to elucidate how survivors' groups contribute to recognition 'as another kind of justice' (Haldemann 2009).

#### **4.5. Transitional Justice through a Masculinities Lens**

As evidenced throughout this chapter, applying a masculinities lens to transitional justice processes foregrounds certain gendered blind-spots and tensions that were previously left un-accounted (see Hamber 2007, 2016). In this section, I further illuminate these gendered dimensions, conditioned by the masculine (O'Rourke 2013) and heteronormative (Bueno-Hansen 2015) structures of justice, thereby deepening the analysis.

Concurring with Hamber (2016), I attest a persistent gap in the ever-expanding literature on gendered transitional justice processes that does not yet sufficiently engage with masculinities. Hamber (2007) previously identified that the study of masculinities in relation to transitional justice is "all but nonexistent" (377) and in fact only gradually emerging. The embryonic body of scholarship primarily focuses on militarized masculinities and their linkages with violence (see Theidon 2009; Hamber 2016), while marginalizing other, hidden and subordinated masculinities. Previous research on the intersections between transitional justice and masculinities was primarily concerned with the question of how to disarm and transform violent masculinities in the post-conflict and transitional period (Theidon, 2007, 2009; Cahn and Ní Aoláin 2010; Ashe 2012). These debates are underpinned by the argument that facilitating transitions from conflict to peace requires that militarized masculinities embodied by former combatants are transformed and addressed. Seminal research by Theidon (2009), for instance, identifies the importance of sustainably demobilizing former combatants to explicitly respond to the perceived loss of masculine privilege and prestige attending such processes (also see O'Rourke 2016). In these debates, however, masculine vulnerabilities and especially male sexual and gendered harms remain largely unaddressed.

Throughout this chapter, I have also shown that transitional justice processes are inherently male-dominated (see Ní Aoláin 2016). Justice in transition is often conceptualized, designed and implemented by, for and about men and in accordance with masculine values (see O'Rourke 2013; Boege 2006). At the same time, transitional justice processes are often also under-pinned by strongly pronounced heteronormative values and norms (Bueno-Hansen 2015). From a masculinities perspective, this often implies that while much transitional justice work is invariably for and about the majority of men, certain male experiences and harms which fall outside the hetero-normativity frame remain marginalized. Male gendered and sexual harms aside various other gendered blind-spots (Ní Aoláin 2012), such as structural gendered inequalities (Otto 2009; Ross 2003), need to be taken into account by transitional justice processes in order to truly deliver holistic gender justice. Towards this end, the utilization of an intersectional lens (see Crenshaw 1989; see Rooney and Ní Aoláin 2007) can shed light on the contextual disparities between different groups of men, and especially on "men's differential access to power and resources depending on other personal and structural characteristics" (O'Rourke 2016: 35).

Applying a masculinities perspective to different justice conceptions similarly reveals that gender-inclusive and harm-responsive redress for conflict-affected men, including for male sexual violence survivors, can often require significant compromises for women and thus for gender justice. Further above, I theorized that male-centric justice can often involve demands for a reparation and restoration of a hetero-patriarchal status quo, implying gendered benefits for hegemonic masculinities in contrast to subordinated masculinities and especially women. Based upon research with Palestinian men under Occupation, MacKenzie and Foster (2017) argue that for males who felt impacted in their masculine identities, "the struggle for peace, security and order becomes a struggle to 'return' men to a supremacy status in the home and in the nation" (14). Quests for justice frequently take on a similar character. MacKenzie and Foster theorize these dynamics as 'masculinity nostalgia', "associated with a romanticized 'return to normal' that included men as heads of household, economic breadwinners, primary decision-makers and sovereigns of the family" (*ibid.*: 15).

Male-centric transitional justice can thus be closely inter-woven with patriarchal gender regimes (see MacKenzie and Foster 2017; MacKenzie 2012), implying unintended drawbacks for women, subordinated men and gender justice more broadly. The analyses in Chapters 7 and 8 show that for many male sexual violence survivors in Acholiland, justice depends on their ability to provide for their families and thereby live up to hegemonic expectations of manhood in Northern Uganda. In this reading, justice can be perceived to be attained if their sense of hegemonic masculinity within a patriarchal gender ordering is re-constituted. Quests for justice, however, inevitably remain fraught if "dependent on, or intertwined with, a commitment to restoring oppressive gender norms" (MacKenzie and Foster 2017: 15).

In light of these different gendered blind-spots and tensions, I argue that a thickened notion of transitional justice (see McEvoy 2008) implies the potential to better address diverse gendered conflict experiences in a more dynamic and fluid capacity. Divorcing and emancipating transitional justice from institutionalism (Sharp 2015; Robins 2011) can open the doors for more creative and inclusive justice processes that move beyond the confines of standardized, masculine and heteronormative practices (Lundy and McGovern 2008). Recognizing a diversity of mundane and

everyday ways of coming to terms with the legacy of human rights abuses (see Das 2003; Alcalá and Baines 2012; Kent 2012) as integral aspects of justice in transition thus implies the potential to transcend some of the gendered barriers, address gendered blind-spots and resolve gendered tensions.

#### **4.6. *Ngol Matir* - The Meaning of Justice in Acholiland**

Prior to concluding this chapter, in this section I investigate the locally-contingent meaning of justice in Acholiland. I show that the most common translation of justice in Acholi, *ngol matir*, can be understood as the process of determining "a right way forward in the aftermath of wrongdoing" (Porter 2013: 106), which is reflective of the broadened and thickened conception of justice used throughout this chapter.

While no commonly agreed upon translation of the word 'justice' in Acholi exists, locally the most common and most frequently adopted translation is '*ngol matir*'. Crazzolara (1938) defines *ngol* as 'to cut', 'to pass a sentence' or 'to decide a question' (327), while *matir* can be translated as 'fair' or 'just' (327). In relation to this, Holly Porter (2013) explains that "*ngol matir* could be understood literally as to 'cut straight', though conceptually it is more accurate to say a fair or right judgment" (98). Indeed, my RLP colleagues initially translated *ngol matir* as 'fair judgment', or 'fair justice'. According to this explanation, *ngol matir* would signify "the decision at the end of a process" (Porter 2013: 98), such as for instance (although not exclusively) the sentencing or judgment at the end of judicial proceedings. Such an interpretation of justice, however, does not necessarily correspond with the views and priorities of most Acholis (Porter 2013; see Allen 2015; Baines 2010), including the lived realities of my informants, as evidenced in Chapters 7 and 8.

Crazzolara's (1938) other interpretation of *ngol* as 'to decide a question' (327) in relation to justice, however, much better aligns with Acholi understandings of justice (Porter 2013). According to local understandings of wrong-doing and crime (see Finnström 2008), primarily measured as a disruption of social harmony (Porter 2012), 'justice', or *ngol matir*, to 'decide a question', can be interpreted as "to decide a right way forward in the aftermath of wrongdoing" (Porter 2013: 106). In this context, 'a right way forward' would ideally be determined in an inclusive and participatory process, involving survivors and offenders, and at times their wider communities, comparable to restorative justice conceptions (Mallinder 2014). In



practice, this is frequently done through local and traditional justice processes (see Chapter 4.3.3). What this 'right way forward' must entail and how it should look, however, is highly individual and contextual, depending upon survivors' lived realities, their social context, the violations committed against them, or the identity of the perpetrator. Based upon this most common conceptualization, I utilize the terminology of '*ngol matir*' for the purpose of this study, understood within the widened frame of 'a right way forward in the aftermath of wrongdoing' (Porter 2013).

Such an interpretation of justice 'as a right way forward' is consistent with the widened understanding of justice employed throughout this dissertation and much more accommodating of a variety of psycho-social components, elements and processes (see Hamber 2009). This approach thereby also corresponds with the wide conception of justice adopted in this dissertation, and stands in contrast to the institutionalized and legalistic construction of transitional justice prevalent throughout the literature (see Aukerman 2002; McEvoy 2007). In many ways, the local understanding of justice vis-à-vis standardized transitional justice approaches illustrates the frictions that arise when global norms grate against local conceptions of justice (Shaw 2007; Tsing 2005; Merry 2006). Therefore, and as summarized by Millar (2011), "justice is not some platonic ideal, but something experienced within a context, and therefore, variable and reliant on local interpretation" (517).

## **4.7. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have put forward the broadened and thickened conception of transitional justice to be utilized throughout this dissertation. In contrast to dominant theorizing, justice will not narrowly be understood through a legalistic lens. Rather, justice is conceptualized as more encompassing and accommodative of a variety of different conceptions, notions and processes in response to violence, crime or wrongdoing, including a myriad of everyday activities navigated by conflict-affected communities themselves. Justice as understood throughout this dissertation also qualifies as a social project (Baines 2010) and a process (Hamber 2009) that unfolds over time, rather than a one-time event.

From a gender perspective, I showed that there is a significant gap in the transitional justice literature that does not sufficiently engage with masculinities (Hamber 2015), and that most transitional justice processes and justice conceptions are inherently

masculine and heteronormative. I argue that a thickened conceptualization of transitional justice implies the potential to depart from otherwise narrowed and institutionalized ideas of justice bound by masculine, heteronormative and patriarchal frames. Similarly, a broadened conception of justice beyond institutionalism allows a focus on gendered harms, including the experiences of male survivors of sexual violence, and illumination of the gender blind-spots that remain muted by standardized transitional justice processes. This broad theorization of transitional justice is utilized again in Chapters 7 and 8, where I investigate what justice means for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda.

Thus far, I have laid the methodological (Chapter 2), conceptual and theoretical (Chapters 1, 3, 4) foundations of this dissertation. Deriving from these premises, the following chapters include more strongly pronounced analytical and empirical components. In Chapters 5 through 8, I present my empirical data, and analyze and discuss my findings by bringing them into conversation with theories and previous research. Rather than categorically separating empirics, analysis and discussion into distinct chapters, as it is relatively common in the social sciences, I instead combine these different components thematically throughout four analytical chapters. I specifically proceed in this fashion because of the broad range of topics to which this dissertation speaks. Setting the focus of the chapters thematically rather than ontologically allows for better foregrounding and illumination of these inter-related themes, thus facilitating a more rigorous analysis.

## **Chapter 5: Conflict and Sexual Violence Against Men in Northern Uganda**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Once referred to as "the biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world" (IRIN 2003), the Northern Ugandan conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group and the Government of Uganda (GoU) (1986-2008) has received substantial international and academic attention (Finnström 2008; Dolan 2009; Allen 2006; Behrend 1999; Baines 2010). The LRA's horrendous atrocities in particular have been subjected to extensive scholarly debate (Amony 2015; Branch 2010; Allen and Vlassenroot 2010), and were covered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the international media alike (HRW 2005; ICTJ 2014; BBC 2006). Multiple human rights violations committed by the Ugandan government armed forces, on the other hand, have received significantly less attention (see AI 1991; Dolan 2009; Branch 2005; RLP 2014a).

Within this context, crimes of sexual violence against men perpetrated by the government's National Resistance Army (NRA)<sup>123</sup> in the early years of the conflict (late 1980s - early 1990s) are particularly poorly documented, and remain almost entirely absent from academic analyses of the conflict, with only few noteworthy exceptions (see Dolan 2009; Esuruku 2011). Although praiseworthy advocacy work on conflict-related sexual violence against men by RLP (2009, 2011) brought attention to these crimes in Northern Uganda (Dolan 2014; RLP 2014a), no systematic and comprehensive scholarly examination of male-directed sexual violence in this context exists thus far.

To address this research gap, this chapter paints a detailed picture of the dynamics of conflict-related sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, situated within their overall historical and political context. Drawing upon original findings derived from the field research underpinning this study, I argue that sexual crimes against men, and specifically male rape, perpetrated by the NRA in the early years of the conflict was widespread and part of wider systematic military operations against the

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<sup>123</sup> Up until 1995, Uganda's national army was called the National Resistance Army (NRA). Thereafter, it was renamed as the Uganda's People's Defense Force (UPDF). For a more detailed discussion of this transition and transformation, see: Katumba-Wamala (2000).

Acholi population. I also demonstrate that these crimes must be situated and analyzed within the context of the wider conflict dynamics and political developments in which they occurred. The findings presented in this chapter thus contribute to contextual scholarship on the Northern Ugandan conflict, and to research on sexual violence in conflict settings more broadly.

Towards this end, section 2 explores the historical and political background of the conflict, to contextually position sexual violence against men within wider conflict dynamics. Section 3 provides empirical evidence regarding the occurrence, frequency, scope and forms of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, while also offering explanations and discussing survivors' most common consequences. In section 4, I provide a brief overview of the conflict between the Government of Uganda and the LRA and introduce more recent and contemporary post-conflict and transitional developments. Through this approach, I situate and contextualize crimes of sexual violence within the overall realm of the conflict genealogy.

Before proceeding with the analysis, however, a brief methodological and source-critical note from a post-colonial perspective is required. While the Northern Ugandan conflict is extensively researched and documented, the majority of most-widely cited studies are written from an outside-perspective and primarily privilege the viewpoints of external, Western academics over national Ugandan scholars. These dynamics mirror many of the previously detected problems of 'white man's' scholarship in international relations and conflict studies (see Lake 2016; Fanon 1961). In an attempt to counter this (neo-colonial) 'white-washing' of scholarship on politics and conflicts in Uganda, I deliberately seek to combine Ugandan scholars with Western authors wherever possible and appropriate.<sup>124</sup> In making my arguments, I therefore refer to local and national scholarship (e.g. Omara-Otunnu 1995; Otunnu 2002; Kasozi 1994) alongside respected outside analyses, primarily by scholars who conducted extensive empirical field research over extended periods of time (e.g. Baines 2010; Behrend 1999; Dolan 2009; Finnström 2008; Porter 2016).

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<sup>124</sup> One implication and consequence of this attempt of 'localizing' scholarship on the Ugandan conflict and prioritizing Ugandan scholars is a lack of female voices, as only very little has been written about the conflict by female Ugandan authors, with only few noteworthy exceptions (Amony 2015). To counter this gender-imbalance, I refer to female external commentary wherever possible (e.g. Baines 2010, 2014; Behrend 1999; Porter 2013).

## 5.2. Historical Background of the Conflict

In this section, I lay out the social, historical and political tapestry forming the background to the Northern Ugandan conflict, arguing that crimes of sexual violence against Acholi men must be situated within this context and these political developments.

### 5.2.1. Colonial Rule and Ethnic Divisions

The origins of the conflict between the LRA and the Ugandan government (1986-2008) can be traced back to colonial times and, at least to some extent, the conflict's roots lie in Uganda's overarching divides and deeply-rooted ethnic mistrust (Finnström 2008; Kasozi 1994). During colonial occupation (1894-1962), alleged tribal differences between Ugandans from the north and the south resulted in binary categorizations and a regional and ethnicized two-level classification: the British colonial administration recruited northerners primarily for the military, amongst others because of their physical appearances and stereotypical assumptions of northerners as warriors (Onyango-Odongo and Jamal Mikla 1976; see Finnström 2008), and southerners mostly for the civil service and the economy. The country's south consequentially hosted the majority of Uganda's educated class, whereas the north became poor and underdeveloped. Dolan (2009) argues that this north-south divide and the singling out of men from Northern Uganda into the military "contributed to a reputation for militarism and violence" (202) specifically for the Acholis, one of the largest tribes in the country's northern region (p'Bitek 1985; Atkinson 1994).<sup>125</sup> This reputation was simultaneously rooted in and further contributed to internalized ethnocentrism and racism, and sat uneasily with Acholi men's self-perception (Dolan 2009).

The colonial administration's divide and rule policy consequentially created a socio-economic division between the north and south, generating a polarized nation ripe for conflict (Okuku 2002; Allen 2006; Branch 2012). For decades, this division was

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<sup>125</sup> A whole ethnographic overview of the Acholi people would go beyond the scope of this chapter. For more detailed information, see: p'Bitek 1985, 1986; Behrend 1999; Finnström 2008. The Acholi as a tribe did not exist as such in pre-colonial times (Behrend 1999: 14). Finnström (2003) argues that the Acholi ethnic identity "was reified or codified because of colonialism" (52). The Acholi people are part of the Western Nilotic language group, "and part of a larger group of Luo peoples" (Seebach 2016: 17). In one of the first anthropological accounts from Acholiland, Girling (1960) proposes that the designation *Acholi* could originate from *An-coo-li* - 'I am a man'.

further intensified and exploited by (masculine) individual presidents who employed violence to rally one region against the other in order to catapult themselves into power and maintain their regime (Chatlani 2007), generating a highly masculinized political climate marked by militarization and violence. Uganda's post-colonial history from 1962 onwards is thus characterized by militarization and episodes of violence and counter-violence (Mamdani 1988). Since colonial rule and after independence, the Ugandan state, in a traditional Hobbesian way of governance (Hobbes 1651), increasingly became a militarized instrument of violent retaliation. Behrend (1999) describes that "whoever took over state power was not only able to gain wealth, but also to take revenge - against members of other ethnic groups or religions" or inhabitants of specific regions (23). A brief genealogy of these (masculine) exchanges of power leading up to the most recent Northern Ugandan conflict, as offered in the following section, sheds important contextual light on some of these developments, and is important for situating crimes of sexual violence against Acholi men within broader conflict dynamics.

### **5.2.2. Post-Colonial Developments**

Following independence in 1962, Uganda experienced various exchanges of power. As Uganda's first post-colonial president, Milton Obote from the northern sub-region of Lango continued to pit the country's regions against each other. Under his regime, northerners from Lango and Acholiland were primarily recruited into the armed forces (Finnström 2003). Obote's reign ended in 1971 by a military coup lead by Colonel Idi Amin, from the West Nile region, who instituted a regime notorious for its political violence (Mamdani 1988). One of Amin's first systematic violent acts upon acquiring political power was murdering numerous Acholi and Langi soldiers in the army (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). Following an invasion from Tanzania, Amin was overthrown in 1979, with Milton Obote returning to power for a second regime. During the Obote II period (1979-1985), northerners once again dominated the armed forces (Mutibwa 1992; see Finnström 2008).

Various political actors who opposed Amin, including current President Yoweri Museveni, did not accept Obote's recapture of power (Oloka-Onyango 2000). With his NAR, and alongside various other armed rebellions, Museveni waged a guerrilla campaign against the northern-led government and its Uganda National Liberation

Army (UNLA). Museveni enjoyed immense support from his own region in the southwest, where a widespread antipathy prevailed towards what was perceived as (military and political) northern domination at the time (Omara-Otunnu 1995; see Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). During this brutal civil war (1980-1986), Acholi and Langi men initially fought on the side of the UNLA government army under the ultimate command of Milton Obote (Finnström 2008). Eventually, rivalries and tensions within the UNLA, where Obote was accused of sacrificing Acholi soldiers in battle, resulted in a coup that installed Tito Okello from Acholiland as interim President (Behrend 1999). Fighting between the UNLA under Okello's command and Museveni's NRA continued and despite a peace agreement between the two fractions signed in Nairobi in December 1985, the NRA marched on Kampala (Finnström 2008).<sup>126</sup> President Museveni effectively assumed authority on 26 January 1986 (Behrend 1999)<sup>127</sup> and remains in power today.

### **5.2.3. Early Conflict Years - Retaliation and Intimidation**

Within the context of these pre-1986 episodes of violence and conflict, Acholi men in the state army were heavily involved in fighting Museveni's guerrilla movement, which was mostly composed of soldiers from the country's central, southern and western regions and from Rwanda. Most of the fighting was concentrated in central Uganda, and in particular around the town of Luwero, about an hour north of Kampala (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). Across the Luwero triangle, the UNLA are reported to have killed an estimated 300,000 civilians (*ibid.*; RLP 2014b), and Allen (1991) notes that "appalling atrocities were perpetrated by what was officially the national army, the UNLA" (371) primarily composed of Acholi soldiers. These historical developments are fundamentally important for situating and contextualizing cycles of violence and conflict within Acholiland following the NRA's acquisition of power (Otunnu 2002).

As soon as Museveni and the NRA gained control over Uganda, thousands of Acholi (and Langi) fighters under the previous governments were forced to flee northwards and seek protection in Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan (Behrend 1999). With

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<sup>126</sup> Museveni's violation of the 1985 Nairobi Peace Agreement with Tito Okello is a source of deep-seated grievances among many Acholi, and is interpreted as demonstrating that Museveni can never be trusted and does not want peace nor reconciliation (see Behrend 1999; Allen and Vlassenroot 2012).

<sup>127</sup> Museveni was officially sworn in as President on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1986 (Allen 1991: 371).

growing unease about their complicated reintegration into civilian life and in opposition to the large-spread violence perpetrated by NRA soldiers against the civilian population, substantial numbers of Acholi men joined the resistance movement (Finnström 2008; Otunnu 2002). This armed opposition was primarily organized around the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), composed of former UNLA soldiers and formed in Juba, South Sudan, in March 1986 (Allen 1991).<sup>128</sup>

Equipped with military and state power and thus with greater opportunity to commit acts of revenge against the northern population for previous crimes, NRA soldiers quickly advanced into Northern Uganda (Otunnu 2002). Behrend (1999) notes that the NRA took control of Gulu and Kitgum in March 1986. The atmosphere during those first months was largely calm, but quickly changed as of May 1986, when the UPDA re-grouped and attacked various NRA army barracks and outposts (JRP 2014; Behrend 1999). Consequentially, "stories of harassment and abuse of civilians by the NRA began circulating in mid 1986" (Branch 2010: 33). According to Branch (2010), "[t]he paradoxical result would be that the NRA/M's wrong-headed strategy, in particular its violence against Acholi civilians, would give birth to the very rebellion the NRA/M had expected" (34).

During this time of political instability, a continuum of conflict and a spatial shift of violence from central to Northern Uganda, "spirit mediums began to play a significant role" (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010: 7). As Allen and Vlassenroot (2010) observe, "partly as a consequence of dramatic social changes, local understandings about communication with the spirit world had expanded in ways that helped make sense of what was happening" (7-8). Spirit mediums were particularly central to the LRA and the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), led by a young woman called Alice Auma (Behrend 1999; Allen 1991). In a complex chain of events, Alice was reported to have been possessed by various spirits, including one referred to as *Lakwena* - Acholi for 'the Messenger' (Behrend 1999). Because of the *Lakwena* spirit, Alice Auma is popularly known as Alice Lakwena, and I therefore follow this accepted practice (see also Finnström 2003). The HSM, "initially formed as an egalitarian, gender-equal, non-violent religious movement" (Finnström 2003: 109), expanded

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<sup>128</sup> Over time, different groups joined the resistance, including the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) and its military wing, the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSFM) (Allen 1991; Behrend 1999) and the LRA under Joseph Kony (see further below; Allen and Vlassenroot 2010).



rapidly, with the political intention of overthrowing Museveni's government (Allen and Vlassenroot 2012). The military wing of the Movement, the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSFM), regularly engaged NRA battalions in combat and registered various military advancements (Behrend 1999), moving approximately one-hundred kilometers east of Kampala, where in November 1987, Alice's army was defeated (Finnström 2008).<sup>129</sup>

Following Lakwena's defeat, and after a brief period of command under Alice's father Severino Lukoya (Behrend 1999), Joseph Kony soon assumed control over Alice's remaining and returning soldiers, as well as over other former UNLA cadres. Kony eventually "renamed his army the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and continued to fight against the government" (Esuruku 2012: 147). Kony, who is often reported to be a cousin of Alice, similarly claims to have taken over some of her spirits, including the *Lakwena*, and to be possessed by various other spirits (Titeca 2012). Divides within the UPDA over the political and military direction of the armed resistance led various soldiers to turn towards Kony, whose movement consequently grew in size and importance. As noted by Allen and Vlassenroot (2010), "by 1990, Kony's force was the only significant armed unit still fighting in the Acholi homelands" (10) against the NRA (and eventually against the Acholi civilian population).

Interpreting the existence of these multiple rebel groups as the ultimate proof of Acholi resistance against Museveni's government, the state's armed forces unleashed a violent military campaign against the population, codenamed 'Operation Pacifying North'. For many observers, the NRA military operations must be seen as "part of a broader strategy implemented by the NRM [National Resistance Movement] Government to target the Acholi population of northern Uganda for their links to the LRA and other rebel movements" (JRP 2013: 26) and for their alleged role in central Uganda in the 1980s (see Dolan 2009). Various scholars suggest that the NRA's violence occurred on the basis of accused rebel collaboration and as retaliation attacks for previous crimes committed by Acholi soldiers against civilians in central

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<sup>129</sup> Alice Lakwena managed to escape to Kenya, where she temporarily lived in a refugee camp. She is reported to have died in 2007. After her escape and the defeat of her movement, her father, Severino Lukoya attempted to re-initiate the movement, commonly referred to as the Holy Spirit Movement II (HSM II). Lukoya, however, was captured and detained by NRA soldiers in 1989, which formally put an end to the movement.

Uganda (and in particular in the Luwero triangle region) (Behrend 1999; Esuruku 2012; Finnström 2008).

As summarized by one of my informants, the NRA's "atrocities were also a pay-back and a revenge for what the Acholi soldiers did in Luwero, and they were a general punishment for all of Acholi" (*Interview, 9 June 2016*). NRA soldiers<sup>130</sup> "exploited the opportunity to avenge themselves upon their former [Acholi] opponents by plundering, murdering, torturing and raping" (Behrend 1999: 25). Especially while searching for weapons taken by former UNLA soldiers and while tracing suspected and accused rebels or rebel collaborators, NRA soldiers attacked the Acholi civilian population (*ibid.*). Men were particularly targeted because of stereotypical assumptions associated with masculinity, violence and aggression, and because of the stereotypical widespread view of Acholi men as warriors (see Dolan 2002). One community member commented, "the NRA thought that they will have to attack men because they thought that men are always the ones fighting and joining the rebels, especially the Acholi" (*Interview, 24 April 2016*). It is within this context that soldiers of the NRA committed horrendous human rights abuses against the civilian population, including killings, torture and sexual violence (Esuruku 2012; Finnström 2008).

### **5.3. *Tek-Gungu* - Male Rape in Northern Uganda**

Embedded within this political framework and these particular conflict dynamics, the NRA also perpetrated crimes of sexual violence against men (Dolan 2009; JRP 2013; RLP 2014a). In this section, I establish the prevalence and scope of these crimes, provide explanations for their occurrence and shed empirical light on the manifold consequences faced by survivors. I argue that during the early years of the conflict, sexual violence against men, and in particular crimes of male rape, were widespread and constituted integral components of a wider military campaign centered around interrogation, retaliation and punishment of the Acholi population. By situating sexual violence against men within these conflict dynamics in this section, I disrupt the conflict genealogy, which I return to in Chapter 5.4. Positioning these crimes within this context and having this thematic indentation aids understanding.

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<sup>130</sup> Many NRA cadres stationed in Northern Uganda were previously integrated into the government army from other rebel groups who during the 1980-86 guerrilla war allied with the NRA in fighting the Acholi UNLA soldiers under Obote and Okello.

For overall contextualization, I reiterate that the vast majority of male-directed sexual violence in Northern Uganda occurred between the late 1980s and early 1990s<sup>131</sup> within the context of military operations perpetrated by the NRA, composed of soldiers from mostly southern and central Uganda.<sup>132</sup> Although the NRA, and later the UPDF, continued to commit atrocities across Acholiland throughout the entire conflict period (Dolan 2009), the military operations against the Acholi population predominantly ceased by the early 1990s (Branch 2011), which also put an end to the widespread perpetration of sexual violence against male and female civilians. Crimes of sexual violence against men within this context were also accompanied by other human rights violations such as degrading and heinous crimes,<sup>133</sup> beatings, acts of torture (Dolan 2009) and sexual violence against women (see Okello and Hovil 2007). As noted in the Introduction, male rape in Acholiland is locally referred to as *tek-gungu*, which in Acholi language literally translates as 'to bend over' (*gungu*) 'forcefully' or 'hard' (*tek*), or alternatively 'the way which is hard to bend' (Finnström 2008). In this context, this terminology specifically applies to male rape. Furthermore, various key-informants attested that the rape of men was uncommon and unheard of in Acholiland prior to the 1986-2008 conflict, and was largely introduced by the NRA soldiers. One male elder explained, "the rape of men was not there in Acholi; it only came with the recent conflict. It did not exist in Acholi culture and tradition" (FGD, 5 May 2016).

Previous research on the war in Northern Ugandan, although rich and diverse, has not yet sufficiently analyzed NRA-perpetrated violence in general, and particularly not sexual violence against men. Throughout existing scholarship on the conflict, despite few noteworthy exceptions (e.g. Dolan 2009), only occasional references to male-directed sexual violence exist, often lacking detailed information and analytical depth. For instance, Behrend's (1999) seminal account of the early years of the conflict only briefly refers to "the NRA's homosexual practices" of raping men (183). Finnström's (2003, 2009) extensive ethnographic research in the region likewise

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<sup>131</sup> The earliest occurrence documented by my research took place in 1987, and the latest in 1994.

<sup>132</sup> The perpetrators' origins implies that their identities may likely be unknown to victims, and that survivors and perpetrators currently do not live in the same communities. This, in turn, carries important implications for the prospect of justice and thus for male survivors' views on and priorities regarding justice (see Chapter 8).

<sup>133</sup> According to research by JRP (2013) and RLP (2014), those heinous and degrading crimes included acts of defecating in cooking pots and granaries, or acts of urinating in the mouths of goats and cattle. These acts were wide-spread across Acholiland, and are perceived to have aimed at humiliating the Acholi population.

includes only two brief cross-references to male rape, while demonstrating that up until recently, stories about *tek-gungu* only circulated as rumors across Acholiland (2009). Dolan's seminal studies (2009, 2011, 2014), research by Esuruku (2011, 2012) and some advocacy-oriented research by RLP (2013, 2014) and JRP (2012, 2013) remain the only exceptions that go beyond solely mentioning male rape. A holistic picture of sexual violence against men in Acholiland thus remains absent from the literature. The findings presented in this chapter address this gap, thereby contributing to contextual research on the Northern Ugandan conflict.

### **5.3.1. Occurrence, Prevalence and Dynamics of *Tek-Gungu***

Throughout this section on the scope and dynamics of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, I primarily rely on the empirical data underpinning this study (see Chapter 2), infused with secondary sources and literature. As explained more fully in Chapter 3, determining the prevalence and scope of sexual violence during armed conflicts proves inherently difficult, conditioned by a general absence of numerical data, under-reporting and/or mis-recognition, amongst other challenges (see Cohen 2016; Dolan 2014). In the absence of quantitative and quantifiable data on male-directed sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, I rely on qualitative findings in assessing the extent and scope of male rape in Acholiland. Based upon survivors' accounts, key-informants' assessments, and numerous triangulated indicators, as explained below, I assess that sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda was common and widespread, and occurred in many locations across the conflict-affected region. In this context, *widespread* primarily refers to the spatial extent of these crimes and their frequent occurrence in different places. I mostly utilize the expansive geographical occurrence of these crimes, coupled with respondents' assessments of the pervasive prevalence of sexual violence against men and the invention of the specific vocabulary of *tek-gungu* to attest this widespread character (see below).

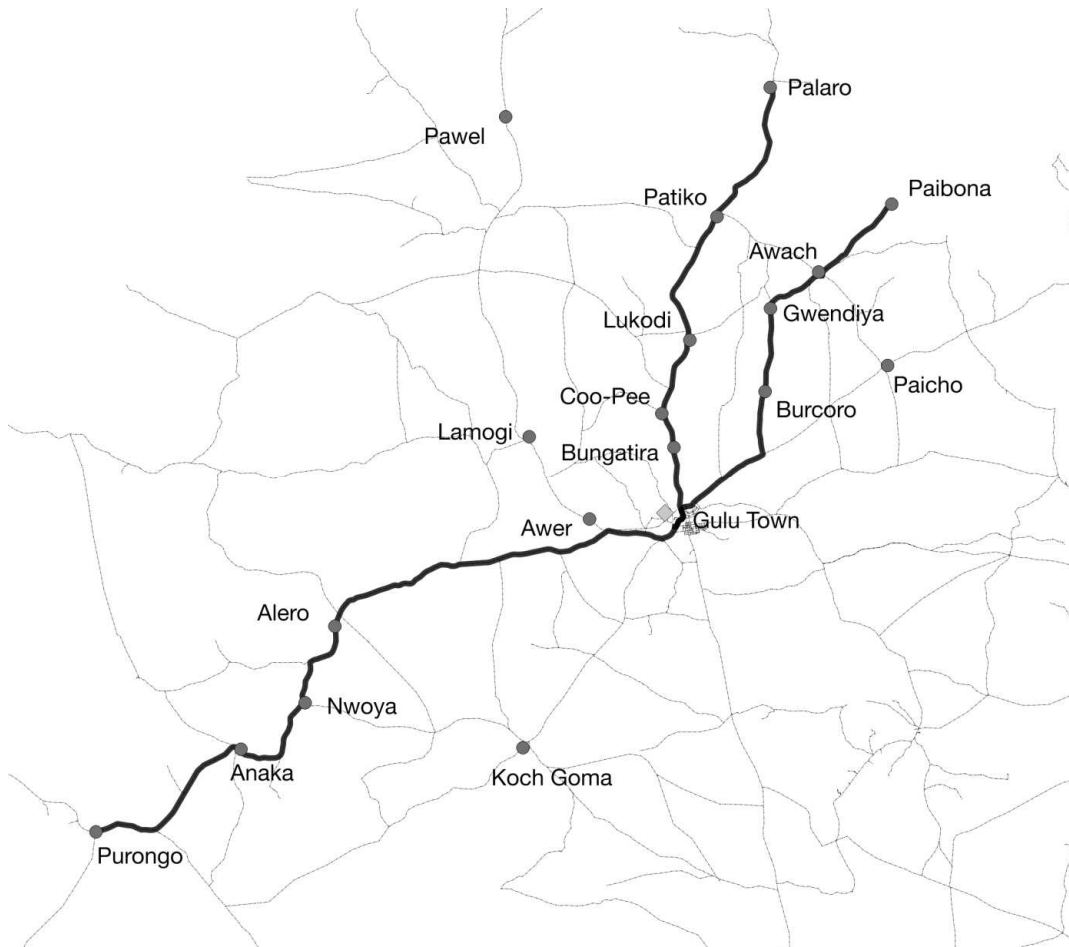
My research documents cases of male-directed sexual violence in various locations across Acholiland, including in the districts of Gulu, Nwoya, Amuru, Kitgum and Pader, providing evidence that these crimes were geographically widespread. The majority of documented cases are scattered across sub-counties and trading-centers around Gulu town, the biggest urban center in the region and the epicenter of the

conflict (*see Illustration 2*). At the same time, villages along some of the major and militarily-strategic roads connecting Gulu town with other regionally important locations (such as Anaka) or leading north towards Southern Sudan (via Pawel or Palaro), where the majority of rebels and former UNLA soldiers were suspected to be in hiding (Behrend 1999), were particularly affected (*see Illustration 3*). As indicated by the enclosed map, documenting the occurrence of male rape, various villages around Alero sub-county on the way to Purongo in current day Nwoya district were particularly targeted. Tim Allen observes that in Alero in general, "NRA anti-insurgency measures had been particularly violent" (1991: 375). Other illustrative examples are the major routes to Palaro and Awach sub-counties, which witnessed widespread sexual violence and particular targeting of men. Tracing these locations suggests strategic patterns, as expanded upon below, directly corresponding with movements of military operations and the involvement of specific NRA battalions, colloquially referred to as *gungu* battalions.



*Illustration 2: Map of Acholiland documenting cases of tek-gungu*<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> The locations documented on the map have been identified in collaboration with male survivors during the workshops, with RLP colleagues and with my research assistant. The listed towns, trading centres and villages indicate locations where sexual violence against men has been documented.



*Illustration 3: Perpetration of tek-gungu along major and military-strategic roads.*

Various respondents also referred to the period between the late 1980s and early 1990s, characterized by dynamic political developments and intense human rights violations, as the '*gungu* period' (*Fieldnotes*, 11 March 2016). During a focus group discussion with male elders, one respondent attested that "it was almost only men during that time who were raped - this is why people call it the *gungu* period" (*FGD*, 6 May 2016). Such illustrative references and connotations suggest that these crimes must have been relatively widespread, and/or perceived to be so extra-ordinarily as to make them stand out from the extensive catalogue of other human rights violations perpetrated by the government soldiers during this turbulent period.

Furthermore, compelling evidence exists to suggest that the LRA's top command was well aware of the perpetration of these crimes and used it in its favor politically, in part to mobilize the population against the government. This awareness was because some of these acts were perpetrated in public and in front of entire communities, as explored further below. Shown below in Illustration 4, an early rebel manifesto from

around 1991 that was circulated by the LRA in the early years of their insurgency to communicate with the Acholi population, includes a graphic illustration of an act of *tek-gungu*, showing two clearly marked NRA soldiers raping a man (see Finnström 2009).<sup>135</sup> The LRA used this to signal and communicate to the Acholi population that Museveni's government is attempting to destroy them, and acts of male rape appeared to constitute a poignant example to demonstrate the NRA's extraordinary cruelty. Similarly, during the 2006-2008 Juba Peace Talks, LRA commander Joseph Kony referred to the government soldiers' violent and common practice of raping Acholi men. Baines (2014) notes that Kony specifically addressed the peace talks delegation by stating that

[t]he elders should not act like they don't know what caused the war. For instance, in 1990 during Operation North, there were cases in which men who were captured were reportedly sodomized (*tek-gungu*) by the NRA - don't you know about *tek-gungu*? (6).

Figure 1.  
An illustration from an unpublished, untitled, and undated early rebel manifesto (ca. 1991). Copy in author's possession.



*Illustration 4: Illustration of tek-gungu from Rebel Manifest (unpublished, untitled, and undated, ca. 1991). (Finnström 2009: 64). Reused with Finnström's approval.*

Overall, the extensive geographical coverage, my informants' statements and assessments, the invention and application of the specific vocabulary of *tek-gungu*, the *gungu*-period as a time indicator and the labeling of specific *gungu* NRA

<sup>135</sup> The illustration is published in an article by Sverker Finnström (2009: 64), and has kindly been made available to me by the author.

battalions all suggest a widespread occurrence of sexual violence against men by the NRA between the late 1980s and early 1990s. Some informants, including male survivors themselves, explained that during this period, "men were heavily affected by rape" (*Workshop 2*). Echoing my findings as presented throughout this section, both Esuruku (2012) and RLP (2014) previously attested that male rape "was widespread" (RLP 2014a: 4). While it remains inherently difficult to ascertain these claims and quantify the overall extent of *tek-gungu*, including numbers of victims, the evidence presented here suggests that sexual violence against men within this specific context and during this particular period must have been common.

### **5.3.2. Forms of Male-Directed Sexual Violence in Acholiland**

Forms of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda are generally quite varied. As conceptualized in Chapter 3, I employ a broadened understanding of conflict-related sexual violence against men, which Carpenter (2006) categorizes into three main types: (1) rape and direct sexual mutilation or torture; (2) civilian men being forced to actively rape or commit sexual violence; and (3) connected harms, referring to situations in which the sexual abuse of women "forms part of a psychological torture against men" (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013: 34). Empirical evidence from Northern Uganda draws attention to all these forms of sexual violence experienced by Acholi men. Male civilians were forcefully raped (Esuruku 2011); men, and in particular youths, in the LRA were forced to have sexual intercourse, either with family members upon abduction or within the context of forced marriages (Okello and Hovil 2007; see Chapter 5.4); and men were forced to witness their wives, daughters, sisters or mothers being raped in front of them by either rebels or government soldiers.

While all of these forms of gender-based violence against men occurred during the conflict in Northern Uganda, I specifically focus on direct forms of sexual violence, and in particular on penetrative anal rape, perpetrated against civilian men. I employ this focus primarily because male rape was arguably the most common and prevalent form of sexual violence against men as perpetrated during this period in Northern Uganda, and the most prevalent form of such violence committed against the



majority of respondents.<sup>136</sup> My data suggest that other forms of sexual violence against men, such as genital beatings and stabbings or sexual humiliations, often accompanied acts of penetrative anal rape, and did not occur in isolation. Although primarily concerned with acts of male rape, my analysis of course also takes into account other sexual violations and harms experienced by the male survivors who participated in this study.

In addition to the vocabulary of *tek-gungu*, many male survivors commonly described their experiences of sexual violence as *butu tek-tek* (*Interviews, 4 May; 13 June 2016*). Interestingly, this is how rape is commonly translated and how female victims often refer to their sexual abuse (*Interview, 1 March 2016*). Porter (2013) outlines that this most common translation of rape "literally means 'sleep strong strong'" (223). As argued by Porter, to 'sleep with' "is the most common way of referring to having sex in Acholi" (*ibid.*), and that the descriptor of *tek-tek*, 'strong strong', refers to the forceful and coercive character of the sexual act (*ibid.*). The fact that most male survivors therefore directly refer to their sexual violations as rape, choosing the same terminology as female victims, stands in contrast to some previous studies which argue that men commonly refrain from employing this terminology, and instead describe their experiences of sexual abuse as torture (see Chapter 3.2.2; Johnson et al. 2008, 2010).

### ***The Localities of Tek-Gungu: In Private and in Public***

While some crimes of male-directed sexual violence occurred publicly in front of victims' communities (*Interview, 25 June 2016; JRP 2013*), many such crimes were perpetrated by "small groups of two to four soldiers in the bushes or even in the men's own homesteads" (JRP 2013: 22) and therefore in the private sphere, "out of sight of the rest of the community" (*ibid.*: 23).<sup>137</sup> Various respondents were raped by multiple perpetrators, suggesting a prevalence of gang rape. Cohen (2016) notes that gang rape across time and space generally comprises the vast majority of reported

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<sup>136</sup> As a contrary viewpoint, a service provider who previously worked with male survivors noted that other forms of sexualized abuse, not male-on-male rape, were the most common form of sexual violence (*Interview, 25 February 2016*).

<sup>137</sup> The gendered implications of these localities and the impact on male survivors' masculinities and identities as men will be examined more carefully in the following chapter.

wartime rape cases.<sup>138</sup> Other acts of male rape occurred in the public sphere (*Interview, 25 June 2016*; JRP 2013). For instance, in one sub-county, NRA soldiers separated the men from the women, locked the men into granaries as holding cells, individually singled them out and then raped them publicly in front of other community members (*Field notes, 13 May 2015*). In other locations, men and women, including husbands and wives, were raped in front of the wider community (*Interview, 25 February 2016*), as a form of public dehumanization and humiliation through sexual violations (*Interview, 15 February 2016*). One male survivor described, "the rape was done in public, and so many people from here knew about it because they witnessed it" (*Workshop 2*). In another instance, as narrated by a survivor,

In the year 1991, government soldiers arrested us. Then they took us and dumped us in the hole in the [redacted] trading center. The hole was dug by the soldiers and they would use it as a cell. Then in the morning, they would pick us one by one and would tie us on the tree and you were beaten. Then under the tree, there were always spears pointing at you. They beat us seriously, then took us back to the hole and started raping us. We were many, and we were given allegations that we were rebels (*Workshop 2*).

As these different testimonials suggest, crimes of male rape in Acholiland were perpetrated both in the private sphere as well as in public. This distinction matters, in part, for understanding male survivors' harms and how they experienced the violations and its aftermath. As explored more fully in Chapter 6.2.2, the differing localities shape how the violations are perceived to impact male survivors' masculinities, as different gendered dynamics play out in the private and public sphere respectively. The locality of violence likewise influences survivors' attitudes towards talking about their violations, which in turn links to their justice-related needs, concerns and priorities (see Chapters 7 and 8).

### **5.3.3. Explaining Sexual Violence against Men in Acholiland**

The survivor's narrative above also illustrate that crimes of sexual violence against men during the Northern Ugandan conflict occurred as integral components of

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<sup>138</sup> Cohen (2016) further notes that "gang rape is also a form of public, sexualized violence, which serves to communicate norms of masculinity, virility, and strength between fighters of both sexes" (18).

punishment and retaliation attacks against the civilian population at large. Based on these dynamics, I now provide context-specific explanations for the occurrence of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda. I thereby draw upon established theoretical explanatory models (see Chapter 3.5), and apply these specifically to the empirical dynamics of male rape in Acholiland.

As articulated in Chapter 3.5, to fully explain conflict-related sexual violence, perpetrator-centric data is needed (see Cohen 2016). Despite a few noteworthy exceptions (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010, 2013; Cohen 2016), there is a persistent lack of data from the perspectives of perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence (Franklin 2004; Horvath and Woodhams 2013; Henry, Ward, and Hirshberg 2003). For male-directed sexual violence, this lack of perpetrator-centric data is particularly striking, and existing research has not yet explored the motives of perpetrators of male-directed sexual violence in conflict settings. By analyzing patterns of sexual violence against men from the outside, and from a survivors' point of view, we can nevertheless begin to unpack some of the collective dynamics and infer arguments regarding potential causes (Leiby 2009b).

### ***Sexual Violence Against Acholi Men as a Strategic Tactic?***

As surveyed in Chapter 3, explanations for conflict-related sexual violence, including against men, are manifold and diverse (Cohen 2016; Sivakumaran 2007; Wood 2006b). Conflict-related sexual violence is undoubtedly a complex phenomenon (Henry, Ward and Hirshberg 2004; Leiby 2009) and "any mono-causal theory is unlikely to account for the observed variation" (Wood 2014: 463) of the causes. Throughout the literature, many existing studies suggest that sexual violence against men is primarily strategic and systematic, often portrayed as a weapon of war (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013), aimed at punishing and intimidating its victims, primarily by way of humiliation through gendered subordination and disempowerment (see Chapter 3.5.2; Alison 2007; Meger 2015; Sjoberg 2016).

Although criticism has been directed to the universal framing of sexual violence (primarily against women) as a strategic 'weapon of war' (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; 3.5.1), the findings underpinning this study generate convincing empirical evidence to argue that in Northern Uganda, sexual violence against men qualifies as a tactic of wider systematic and strategic warfare operations (see Dolan

2009; Esuruku 2011).<sup>139</sup> The geographically widespread acts of *tek-gungu* perpetrated by the NRA occurred within the context of wider military campaigns and systematic human rights violations against the civilian population. As contextualized above, these military operations are locally understood as retaliation and revenge attacks against the Acholis and/or as interrogation and punishment for suspected rebellion or rebel collaboration (JRP 2012). A male community member asserted that "the NRA decided to rape men to revenge against the Acholi for what happened in Luwero, and because they accused the population of supporting Kony's rebels" (FGD, 5 May 2016). Wood (2014) asserts that sexual violence qualifies as strategic if perpetrated against particular populations and for instance "as a form of collective punishment" (472). Numerous survivors reported that they were raped on accusation of supporting the LRA (e.g. *Workshops 2, 3*) or because they were suspected to be former UNLA soldiers (*Fieldnotes, 15 February 2016*). Various survivors were explicitly accused of "being a father to the rebel" (RLP 2014a: 4) and were threatened that "this is what you get for supporting Kony" (*Workshop 2*).

Furthermore, previous research has documented that state armed forces in particular perpetrate sexual violence "where and when rebel forces are visibly active but not strong enough to engage the State in frequent combat, using rape against communities of purported insurgent supporters [...] but also to punish and terrorize [the civilian population]" (Wood 2014: 472). For both Leiby (2009) and Wood (2014), if sexual violence conforms to these patterns, it is "thus probably strategic" (472). These patterns certainly apply to general violence, including male rape, perpetrated by the government army against Acholi civilian communities as a form of punishment and retaliation. My data show that many acts of male rape were committed as punishment for accused rebel collaboration (see above). The geographical patterns of the occurrence of *tek-gungu*, related to military troop movements, as detailed above, similarly suggest a widespread and strategic perpetration of male rape (see *Illustration II*). These crimes also occurred during the early phases of the conflict, when LRA rebel forces were visibly active although not

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<sup>139</sup> This discussion thereby evidences partially different factors and logics between sexual violence against men and women, hence implying important findings in itself.

yet strong enough to engage the state army in frequent combat (see Allen and Vlassenroot 2010).<sup>140</sup>

Key-informants similarly suspected that the "raping of men was a deliberate strategy as part of wider deliberate attempts to discourage and destroy the Acholi, by humiliating and weakening them through rape" (*Interview, 15 February 2016*). Various male survivors attested that during the sexual abuse, the perpetrating soldiers frequently said (mostly in Kiswahili) that they "wanted to finish the Acholi people" (*Workshop 3*) or that these acts were intended "as a pay-back for what happened in Luwero" (*Workshop 4*). Most survivors themselves indeed suspected that collective revenge and retaliation as well as the intention to prevent the male Acholi civilian population from rebelling against the government were the main reasons for the government soldiers to sexually violate them. As articulated by one survivor, "they chose to sodomize men because men are the ones known to be military strong and they were in the previous government and army. The NRA wanted to show that the Acholi were defeated because they are now women and weak" (*Workshop 2*). A male elder further explained, "men were sodomized and they are now women because they are powerless. They targeted men because they were security provider. They were sodomized to prove that they are now powerless" (*FGD, 6 May 2016*).<sup>141</sup>

Research by JRP (2013) furthermore suggests that "the sexual abuse of men was utilized as a way to further humiliate the people [...] by stripping the men of their dignity" (23). The community's interpretations upheld that "men who have been raped are considered to have lost their status as men" (*ibid.*). By way of sexual violence, Acholi male survivors are therefore (perceived to be) rendered subordinate to the (non-Acholi) male perpetrators. This gendered devaluation (Sjoberg 2016; Enloe 2004) of individual male victims is expected to translate and transfer across the Acholi population more widely (Esuruku 2011). The motive of revenge against and to punish the Acholi, as explored above, therefore played out on a collective and communal level and in a gendered manifestation.

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<sup>140</sup> In the early years of the conflict, the LRA did not yet engage in frequent battle with the Ugandan army, nor did the rebels attack the civilian population. Only in the early- and mid- 1990s, after having gained considerable strength, did the LRA engage in more frequent military combat with the NRA, and turn against the civilian population (see Allen and Vlassenroot 2012).

<sup>141</sup> These dynamics are explained more fully in the following Chapter.

Another widespread belief regarding the causes of male rape is that such violence deliberately aimed to infect the Acholis with HIV/Aids. Olara Otunnu, originally from Uganda and former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, noted that during the Northern Ugandan conflict, "rape and sexual exploitation, especially by government soldiers, have become routine" and "HIV/AIDS is being used as a deliberate weapon of mass destruction" (2009: 1). He further alleged that "[g]overnment soldiers [were] screened, and those who test HIV-positive [were] deployed to the north, with the mission of wreaking maximum havoc [...]. Consequently, the rate of HIV infection [in Acholiland] has exploded [...] to staggering levels of 30 to 50 percent" (*ibid.*).<sup>142</sup> Behrend (1999) similarly notes that "a high percentage of the soldiers [were] HIV positive" and therefore, "many of the rapes result[ed] in infection and thus in death" (183). According to Finnström's (2009) observations, it was locally alleged that the NRA's raping of civilian of both sexes aimed to spread the deadly HIV virus (65) as a way of targeting the Acholi population. In support of these secondary assessments, my empirical findings evidence HIV/Aids infections among the physical consequences of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda (see Chapter 5.3.4). The data underpinning this study include references to male survivors who died due to HIV/Aids, or who are contemporarily HIV-positive as a result of having been raped by government soldiers (*e.g. Workshop 1*; see Chapter 5.3.4).

All of these aspects lend empirical support to the argument that sexual violence perpetrated by the NRA against the civilian population, including against men, during the Northern Ugandan conflict was a deliberate and strategic tactic, conforming with Wood's (2014) and others' theoretical explanatory models of sexual violence as a strategy (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; Leiby 2011). At the same time, however, it remains inherently difficult to verify whether these crimes were specifically ordered by the army's top command, including President Museveni, or whether military orders were issued at lower ranks. As emphasized by Wood,

[o]rganizations that explicitly order combatants to rape are probably rare (but do exist). Probably more common are organizations where some form of sexual

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<sup>142</sup> Such a practice would lend further empirical support to my assessment that sexual violence by the NRA against Acholi civilians, and including against men, constituted part of a wider and systematic tactic or strategy.

violence by combatants is a *strategy* authorized not by explicit orders but by 'total war' or other permissive rhetoric (2014: 471) [emphasis added].

Conceptually, seeking explanations for the occurrence of sexual violence against men, and whether or not such crimes qualify as a systematic and strategic tactic, proves important for a variety of reasons, including with regards to questions around justice. If sexual violence against men constitutes a systematic tactic, rather than occasional opportunistic acts, this likely influences survivors' quests for justice and carries implications for what redress is sought and who (commanders or individual combatants) can be held criminally accountable (see Chapter 8).

### ***Survivors' Interpretations: Sexual Violence against Men as Opportunistic***

Various male survivors themselves also suspected that the NRA soldiers specifically chose to rape civilians of both sexes "because they stayed for too long in the bush without seeing their women so they took women and men to have sex with" (*Workshop 2*). According to another male survivor, "I think these were soldiers who were so long in the bush without sex so I think this is why they decided to rape me" (*Workshop 1*). According to such interpretations, the large-scale occurrence of rape would at least in part be attributed to the fact that, immediately after the guerilla war in central Uganda (1980-86), many NRA soldiers were posted to Northern Uganda and thus spent considerable time away from civilian life and their wives or other female sexual partners (*Interview, 24 April 2016*). Within this context and deprived of sex, NRA soldiers are thought to have raped civilian women and men in order to satisfy their sexual needs. Research by Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013) demonstrates that many people in general, including military staff and soldiers, "understand conflict-related rape in this way" (19).

Such an interpretation would lend empirical support to the opportunistic rape thesis (Cohen 2016; Wood 2014), referring to "rape carried out for private reasons rather than organization objectives" (Wood 2014: 470; also see Chapter 3.5). Cohen (2016) explains that according to the opportunism argument, which heavily relies on essentialist and dichotomized categories of male perpetrators and female victims, "rape, then, may be the result of a lack of access to sex that would normally take place within combatants' peacetime relationships with their wives and girlfriends" (47). Scholarship on sexual violence against men, however, has almost entirely

neglected this explanatory framework (see Chapter 3.5). I argue that this neglect of opportunism as a potential variable for explaining the occurrence and dynamics of male-directed rape derives from heteronormative and heterosexual assumptions regarding the nature and dynamics of sexual violence (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013).

I do not intend to suggest, however, that male rape in the context of Northern Uganda must in fact be unitary qualified as opportunistic violence. To ultimately determine these causes, we must study the perpetrators (Cohen 2016; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013). At the same time, the evidence too strongly suggests strategic patterns (see above). The opportunism argument in this context would also downplay the violations' gendered components, and would thus not allow for a sophisticated analysis of sexual violence as sexed and *gendered* (Sjoberg 2016). Instead, my discussion of these divergent survivors' interpretations aims, firstly, to contrast male survivors' diverse and individual subjective interpretations regarding the reasons for their sexual violations with conceptually-driven scholarly analyses; and secondly, to evidence that mono-causal explanatory models cannot sufficiently account for the causes of and establish explanations for sexual violence. While the occurrence of male rape in Acholiland thus suggests clear strategic patterns, this does not preclude that individual soldiers at times opportunistically sought sexual satisfaction and gratification out of these acts. Indeed, "even within the same conflict, sexual violence can serve multiple functions in different contexts and at different points in time" (Leiby 2006: 445) and can have manifold explanations and causes (Cohen 2016).

#### **5.3.4. Consequences of Male Rape in Northern Uganda**

In this section, I explore the consequences of sexual violence for male survivors in Northern Uganda, which can broadly be categorized into physical, psychological and physiological impacts. One male survivor summarized that "the effects of the violations were really many: many health complications, physically and also psychologically" (*Workshop 3*). The findings presented here add empirical depth to the limited existing literature on the consequences of male-directed sexual violence in conflict zones (see UN OCHA 2008; Peel 2004), to which I refer throughout this section.



## ***Physical Consequences***

As articulated by various survivors, "our biggest challenge is our physical health" (*Workshop 4*). Survivors frequently described abdominal pain, waist and back pain, body aches, rectal prolapse and anal ruptures and anal itching and bleedings, among other symptoms (*Workshops 1-3*). As a compounded result of many of these health complications, numerous survivors also reported physical difficulties in urinating or passing stool. As described by one informant,

I started developing a lot of complications in passing urine and stool with a lot of pain. Every time I go to pass stool, my rectum collapses and at times I discharge blood when passing stool and also when passing urine, I get a lot of pain (*Workshop 2*).

These medical complications affecting the male survivors who participated in this study reflect the physical consequences of sexual violence against men during armed conflict as discussed throughout the literature (see Christian et al. 2008; Dolan 2014; Johnson et al. 2008). Interestingly, several male survivors related their physical injuries to women's experiences and catalogued the consequences as female harms. For instance, one male survivor explained that he "experience[d] waist pain like a woman during pregnancy" (*Workshop 3*), while another survivor described to "always get waist pain which is a thing that happens to women but not to men" (*Workshop 4*). Another male survivor described his problems of anal bleedings, as a result of rectal prolapse, as "menstruating" (RLP forthcoming).

Many of these physical health consequences are continuous into the present day post-conflict period, at times up to thirty years after the violations occurred. "I am still feeling the pain up to today" (*Workshop 2*), a survivor attested, while another survivor described that "to date, I still have problems; I am still affected up to now" (*Workshop 3*). For numerous male survivors, the continuous consequences and harms can be attributed to the lack of medical treatment in the aftermath of the violations. "It was not easy to access medical services in that period of time", a survivor attested (*Workshop 2*). According to another survivor,

unfortunately during that period there was no hospital that was operational here so they were using only warm water to treat me. That is why it has brought me a lot

of weakness up to now because I think that if there would have been an operational hospital that would have been better than now (*Workshop 1*).

Whilst the conflict was on-going and particularly in the early years, the provision of medical care and the availability of hospitals and health centers was severely limited. Not only male sexual violence survivors, but also other conflict-affected communities with diverse injuries were unable to access sufficient medical treatment (Okot 2017).<sup>143</sup> At the same time, however, the situation for male rape survivors was particularly difficult, due to fear, shame and stigmatization underpinned by notions of masculinity (Sivakumaran 2005; Sorensen 2011) and because of health professionals' internalized stereotypes of who can be a victim of sexual violence within a highly heteronormative societal setting (RLP 2013). Because of social constructions of Acholi hegemonic masculinity (Dolan 2009), which disallow men to be vulnerable and dictate them to be strong (see Chapter 6), the majority of male survivors restrained from reporting their violations and from seeking services, because they were ashamed or because they perceived that "they should be able to cope as men" (*Workshop 1*). For instance, an Acholi male survivor described,

I went with [the physical complication] to [St. Mary's Hospital] Lacor in 1995.<sup>144</sup> Reaching Lacor, instead of being seen by a man or a mature person, they sent me a young lady to examine me. I refused to undress and went back home so I just bought drugs from the clinic and I have just been taking drugs but the problem of pain in my anus, waist and back continues (*Workshop 2*).

Different studies across various contexts have previously documented that male survivors face inherent challenges of accessing medical treatment and restrain from reporting the sexual violations committed against them because of these different factors (see Chapter 3.3; RLP 2013; Sivakumaran 2007; Solangon and Patel 2012). According to another Acholi male survivor, "it was not possible for you to go to the clinic with this violation and explain what happened. They would have laughed at you, called you a homosexual or even reported you to the government" (*Workshop*

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<sup>143</sup> The high militarization of the region (Dolan 2009) and insecurities caused by intense rebel activities (Blattman and Annan 2010) also disenabled and disallowed civilians to travel larger distances, for instance to Gulu or Kitgum town where medical treatment was available, although in a highly restricted capacity.

<sup>144</sup> This was approximately four years after the initial violation.

1).<sup>145</sup> For feminist scholar Leatherman (2011), such a lack of adequate health care and support structures constitutes a clear form of re-victimization.<sup>146</sup>

Furthermore, and as described above, the sexual violations often occurred in combination with a variety of other forms of violence, such as torture or severe beatings. The injuries and physical consequences of these (non-sexual) violations frequently intersect with the sexual harms. As a result of these manifold and intersecting physical consequences, various male survivors were unable to work.<sup>147</sup> At least one male survivor also attested to have been infected with HIV/Aids as a result of the sexual violation (*Workshop 1*), and participants explained that some former members of the groups have died as a result of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and diseases, most probably caused by the sexual violations (*Workshops 3, 4*).

### ***Psychological Consequences and Social Stigmatization***

The psychological consequences experienced by male sexual violence survivors extend from shame, fear and stigmatization to nightmares, reported symptoms of depression, social isolation and exclusion as well as feelings of anger and powerlessness, amongst others. Similar psychological consequences resulting from sexual violence against men across diverse conflict settings have previously been identified by existing (albeit limited) research (see Peel 2004; UN OCHA 2008).

For one Acholi male survivor, "the immediate impact that the rape brought was fear. I was living under extreme fear that they will come again and either do the same or even do worse" (*Workshop 2*), while for another male survivor, "even up to now when I look at a soldier, I start shivering and shaking" (*Workshop 1*). According to one survivor, "because of fear and anger, some [male] victims [of sexual violence] deliberately joined rebel forces in those early years", primarily in an attempt to

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<sup>145</sup> As described more fully in the following Chapter, homosexuality is legally and politically outlawed and criminalized in Uganda (Alava 2016) punishable by life in prison (see Chapter 6.4).

<sup>146</sup> While the vast majority of male survivors were unable to access medical care in the immediate aftermath of the violations, or while the conflict was on-going, some male survivors in the present context have been able to seek medical treatment. In particular, some male survivors have benefited from RLP's rehabilitative measures, and were referred for treatment to St. Mary's Hospital Lacor (Chapter 8.4). As discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, these medical interventions immediately relate to male survivors' justice needs, and in particular to their demands for reparations.

<sup>147</sup> The gendered implications of this inability to work and thus to provide for their families as expected of them in accordance with the normative hegemonic model of masculinity in Acholiland (Dolan 2011, 2002) are thoroughly unpacked in Chapter 6.2.2.

retaliate against the NRA (*Workshop 2*).<sup>148</sup> Further, according to various survivors, in localities where the sexual violations occurred in the public sphere or where community members otherwise got to know about these crimes, there is "a lot of stigmatization of us by the members of the community and that has really broken our hearts because everywhere we go, people are pointing at us" (*Workshop 4*). According to another male survivor, "from the people here, I feel stigmatization. When people are drunk they will stigmatize me and that will undermine my dignity as a human being" (*Workshop 1*). One male survivor,

decided to stay isolated and not in public places, because if I stay with other people there is the problem of stigma. People are calling us the wives of the government or homosexuals because of what happened to us and that is really stigmatizing (*Workshop 2*).

This stigmatization in turn often results in social isolation and exclusion. Because of the humiliation and stigmatization, coupled with fear, various survivors reported to have fled their homes, mostly to Gulu town or other (semi-)urban centers across the region (*Workshop 2*). The prevalence of social stigmatization as one central psychological implication of male-directed sexual violence during war and armed conflict has previously been documented in the literature (see Onyango and Hampanda 2011). Most existing studies indeed argue that one of the most common and most severe social consequence for male survivors is the social stigmatization attached to their violations (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010; Dolan 2014; Sorensen 2012; UN OCHA 2008).

Conditioned by a variety of intersecting factors, including shame and social stigmatization, various male survivors were also excluded or expelled from their communities (see Christian et al. 2011), and thus frequently live/lived in isolation. As deconstructed in more depth further below (see Chapter 6.2.2), a considerable number of male victims were left by their wives and/or wider families due to the associated stigma attached to the sexual violations committed against them.<sup>149</sup> Comparable to the non-availability of medical treatment, there similarly was a

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<sup>148</sup> See discussion above regarding the LRA's awareness about these government-perpetrated crimes and their political mobilization around it.

<sup>149</sup> Previous research clearly documents that women likewise experience exclusion, and that women who have been raped may be socially stigmatized and become isolated and separated from their families (Cohen 2016; Stewart 2015).

striking lack of psycho-social support, that according to male survivors further exacerbated their psychological problems. For instance, one male survivor described, "psychologically, we were also greatly affected because of many masquerading thoughts but we had nobody to share our experiences with and get any emotional support" (*Workshop 2*). In Chapter 7, I examine more carefully how within this vacuum of available psycho-social services for male survivors of sexual violence, support groups constitute an avenue for them to engage with their experiences, including through peer-counseling (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016).

### ***Physiological Consequences***

The majority of male survivors moreover reported physiologically conditioned inabilities to achieve or sustain an erection and attributed this to their sexual violations. "Ever since the rape, I cannot get an erection anymore" (*Workshop 1*), one male survivor attested. Edström, Dolan et al. (2016) point out that,

[o]ne of the most common physiological dimensions of the impact on male victims of sexual violence appears to be its almost universal numbing of their capacity for sexual arousal. An inability to achieve or maintain erections – so central to their relations with their wives or female partners – is the visible symptom (26).

"My desire for sex vanished and diminished ever since the rape", one male survivor described (*Workshop 3*). Research on male-directed sexual violence outside the context of war, for instance in prison settings, male fraternities or the military, documents similar effects on male survivors' desire for sexual intercourse or on their physiological abilities to achieve an erection (see Mendel 1995). Specifically focusing on sexual violence against men within the setting of war and armed conflict, only few existing studies have paid particular attention to these physiological consequences, including their gendered implications (see Dolan 2014; Edström, Dolan et al. 2016). Against this background, in the following chapter I more closely examine how the inability to erect, have sex and thus procreate, which is so central to the Acholi model of hegemonic masculinity (Dolan 2002, 2009), impacts male survivors' gendered identities.

## **5.4. 'When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers' - An Overview of the Northern Ugandan Conflict**

This chapter thus far thoroughly contextualized crimes of sexual violence against men in Acholiland and embedded these violations within wider conflict dynamics. The remainder of this chapter now provides a brief overview of the conflict between the LRA and the Government of Uganda.<sup>150</sup> I also provide information about sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by the LRA, including against men, as well as about more contemporary post-conflict and transitional developments. Focusing on the broader context of the overall conflict is important for understanding the intersectional conflict-related experiences of male sexual violence survivors,<sup>151</sup> and for contextualizing northern Uganda's transitional justice landscape (see Chapters 7 and 8).

### **5.4.1. The LRA Conflict and Violence Against Civilians**

While the early years of the conflict (1986-1991/92) were primarily characterized by large-scale human rights violations by the NRA against civilian communities, the Acholi population arguably suffered most heavily at the hands of the LRA during subsequent years and during the conflict-affected period (Blattman and Annan 2010; Vlassenroot and Allen 2010).<sup>152</sup> Throughout the course of the conflict, levels of violence by the LRA varied significantly; the acute brutality fluctuated over the years, ultimately increasing again (Dolan 2002). Violent attacks, massacres and mass abductions were often in response to military operations instigated by the Ugandan Government (Branch 2010), such as Operation 'Pacifying North' (1991), Operation 'Iron Fist' (2002) or Operation 'Lightning Thunder' (2008) (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). Overall, for over two decades, between 1986 and 2008, the conflict between the LRA and the Government resulted in large-scale human rights violations with

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<sup>150</sup> For a more detailed and complete overview of the conflict and about the formation of the LRA and its history in general, see Finnström 2008; Allen and Vlassenroot 2010.

<sup>151</sup> These intersectional conflict-related experiences include displacement and abduction. For instance, the majority of male survivors in Acholiland were displaced into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps alongside more than 90 percent of the population (Branch 2011). Various male survivors also reported that in subsequent conflict years, they were abducted by the LRA, and either forced as porters to carry luggage and looted goods for the rebels, or had to spend time within the rebel ranks (e.g. *Workshop 2*).

<sup>152</sup> During this period, the Ugandan army continued to commit human rights abuses, such as for instance sexual and gender-based violence, primarily against women, within the IDP camps (see Okello and Hovil 2007).

immense civilian casualties (Allen 2006). An African proverb quite adequately describes this situation of civilians being affected by and trapped in-between warring parties as: *'When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers'*.

Much has been written about the LRA's initial motivations for picking up arms against the government (Allen 2006; Allen and Vlassenroot 2010; Finnström 2008). Most popular studies suggest religious reasons, often mystifying, demonizing and de-politicizing the rebel group (see Chatlani 2007; Finnström 2008). In fact, most analyses of the conflict centre around religious and spiritual aspects (Titeca 2010), concentrating on the LRA's motivation to rule Uganda in accordance with the ten commandments, as well as the LRA's widespread (and often seemingly random) brutality, whilst the rebel group's political ambitions are often ignored (Finnström 2010; Titeca 2010). However, throughout the course of the conflict, and particularly in the early years, the LRA justified their actions by stating their political objectives, which included overthrowing the government under President Museveni and ensuring the Acholis' political participation and overall development (Finnström 2010).

The armed opposition against the incumbent government was largely connected to a somehow spiritual mission to 'cleanse' the Acholi tribe (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999). As the conflict gradually developed, however, attacks against the civilian population increased, in part as retaliation for not supporting the insurgency or for allegedly assisting the enemy, the Ugandan government (Branch 2012). For instance, parts of the civilian population formed citizen militias and local defense units, locally referred to as arrow boys (Tapscott 2017), which the LRA interpreted as a sign of civilian resistance against their rebellion. At the same time, the LRA grew largely dependent upon forcefully abducting civilians (Apio 2007), particularly youths, to generate a larger armed force to fight its cause, especially during the mid-1990s, when the LRA received significant support from the Sudanese government and was therefore able to expand their operations (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010: 12). According to UNICEF, approximately 35,000–66,000 children and youths were abducted by the LRA, forced to fight as child soldiers and/or serve as sex slaves

(Annan, Blattman and Horton 2006; Blattman and Annan 2010).<sup>153</sup> During the more than two decade long conflict, tens of thousands civilians were killed, mutilated, tortured, raped and otherwise sexually abused by both the LRA and government forces (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). Most of the region's basic infrastructure was destroyed and social relations largely broke down (Dolan 2009; Finnström 2008; Rosenoff-Gauvin 2013).

At the height of the conflict in the early 2000s, more than one and a half million people, up to 95 per cent of the civilian population, were forced from their villages and homesteads into camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the entire northern region (Dolan 2009; Branch 2010; Whyte et al. 2012). In these camps, civilians were supposed to live under the government's protection. In fact, however, the conditions were largely inhumane and IDPs suffered continuous human rights violations, including gender-based violence, often at the hands of the soldiers there to protect them (Okello and Hovil 2007; Porter 2013). Civilians in the camps were similarly exposed and vulnerable to constant rebel attacks (Branch 2010; Mergelsberg 2012). Against this background, Chris Dolan (2009) appropriately describes the camps as a form of 'social torture'.

#### **5.4.2. Forms of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Northern Uganda**

In addition to being situated within specific conflict dynamics, sexual violence against men must also be positioned in relation to other forms of sexual and gender-based violence more broadly. Okello and Hovil (2007) note that gender-related crimes during the conflict have been pervasive, while Finnström (2009) similarly observes that during the course of the conflict, "sexual violence and rape have [...] become common in war-torn northern Uganda" (63).<sup>154</sup> Since the early to mid-1990s, crimes of sexual violence were primarily directed against civilian women (Akumu Okot, Amony and Otim 2005), perpetrated by government soldiers, LRA rebels and civilian men alike (Porter 2013).<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Data regarding scale and incidence of abduction, however, vary. Another widely quoted UNICEF figure refers to 20.000 - 25.000 abducted children. See Blattman and Annan 2012 for a thorough discussion about the nature and causes of LRA abduction.

<sup>154</sup> Finnström (2009) furthermore observes that "[a]lthough the rebels eventually came to rape and exploit women sexually, in the beginning of the war, people attributed these activities to the government troops" (63).

<sup>155</sup> In line with the broadened conceptualization of sexual violence as utilized in this thesis, these forms of sexual violence against women can be a form of psychological targeting of men, especially



The breakdown of social relations, catalyzed by the conflict in general (Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014) and the massive forced displacement in particular (Dolan 2009), contributed to growing rates of domestic violence and spousal abuse (Akumu Okot, Amony and Otim 2005; Porter 2013). Sexual and gender-based crimes committed by civilian men against their wives or against other women are often linked to changing gendered power relations (see Enloe 2000; Pankurst 2008). Okello and Hovil (2007) observed that in the camps, "men, unable to support their families, feel impotent, which leads them into a vicious cycle of anger and abuse" (442). Because women were often the main recipients of aid distributions within the camps (*Interview, 17 March 2016*) and thus the main provider for their families, men's identities and roles as household heads were threatened (Dolan 2002; Okello and Hovil 2007), producing a context in which some men reverted to (sexual) violence to (re)gain power and dominance and (re)assert their masculinities (Dolan 2011). Further, high insecurities, constrained income-generating activities and inhumane living conditions in the camps (Branch 2011; Mergelsberg 2012; Dolan 2009) often left women dependent on 'survival sex' in exchange for food or security, often offered by the soldiers stationed within the camps (Okello and Hovil 2007: see Utas 2005).

Women and girls abducted by the LRA were also subjected to various forms of sexual and gender-based violence (Amony 2015; Baines 2014). Overall, a strict sexual conduct prevailed within the LRA (Baines 2014; Porter 2012). Young female recruits were given as servants and wives to male commanders within the context of 'forced marriages', and senior commanders often had several wives (Amony 2015; Baines 2015).<sup>156</sup> These forced marriages are often classified as violations of international humanitarian law (Okello and Hovil 2007; Annan et al. 2011), and are in fact included as gender-based crimes in the ICC charges against former LRA commander Dominic Ongwen (see Ogora 2016). Based upon statements by Joseph Kony and other top LRA commanders, Baines (2014) considers forced marriages to be a component of the LRA's political project of imagining a new Acholi national, by way of "reproducing - literally giving birth to - the [new] nation" (2). Baines explains

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when men were forcibly made to watch female members of their family being raped, as was done at times by the LRA (see Baines 2014).

<sup>156</sup> Some men also were forced into these marriage arrangements, which can therefore also be seen as a form of gender-based violence against men, as conceptualized in Chapter 3. However, this is a subject of further study (see Aljazi and Baines 2017).

that "the vision of the 'new Acholi' was operationalized through the institution of forced marriage and recreation of the familial unit" (*ibid.*: 6).

Sexual relations outside the context of these arranged marriages were strongly prohibited, and violations of these rules, including the rape of civilians or (forced) sex with other LRA abductees, were sanctioned by punishments, often in the form of severe beatings or death (Amony 2015). Baines (2014) quotes a former female abductee who explains that "the rape of civilians did not happen. There was a rule among the Holy (the LRA) that no one was to be promiscuous. This meant that when you abducted a civilian you were not to sleep with her recklessly" (8). As explained by Baines (2014), such rules primarily aimed to protect "the moral purity of the new Acholi as a chosen group" (6). Despite these regulations, however, there clearly were cases of sexual violence against civilian women by the LRA. Based upon research with 187 female rape survivors in Gulu district, Porter (2013) notes 13 incidents of female civilian rape by the LRA. Baines in her research "encountered dozens more incidents" (2014: 8). According to Baines, "the LRA undoubtedly carried out civilian rape even if reported in smaller numbers, but likely these were incidents that took place without the knowledge of more senior commanders [...]" (*ibid.*), thus suggesting opportunistic causes.

At the same time, many former LRA 'bush wives' (see Baines 2014; Coulter 2009) continue to face numerous gendered challenges and experience diverse forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination upon return to civilian life (Amony 2015; Dubal 2016; Stewart 2015). For instance, returnees are often exposed to sexual violence by family or community members and experience highly gendered discrimination in terms of restrained access to education, income-generating activities or, crucially, agricultural land for themselves and their children (Amony 2015). In the socio-cultural context of Acholiland, children born of war face additional hardship. For instance, they often do not have a relationship to their paternal clans (Stewart 2015). This is especially problematic, as "in Acholi's patrilineal and patrilocal culture, a child's identity is linked to his or her father's family and clan. Knowing one's paternal home village is a paramount aspect of social belonging and identity formation" (Schulz 2017a: 2; see Amony 2015; Stewart 2015).

### ***Sexual Violence Against Men within and by the LRA***

Even though the overwhelming majority of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda was committed by government soldiers (Esuruku 2012), and most forms of sexualized and gender-based crimes perpetrated by the LRA targeted women (Baines 2014; Porter 2013), my research documents few isolated cases of male-directed sexual violence within the LRA. While studies on NRA-perpetrated sexual violence against men are generally scarce, research on such violence within and by the LRA thus far remains almost non-existent.

My research has confirmed at least two cases of male-on-male rape within the LRA. In both cases, senior male commanders raped young male LRA recruits, and the dynamics of these instances suggest opportunistic motives, rather than strategic causes. While "sexually immoral behavior" (Baines 2014: 1) in the form of sexual violence against women was prohibited and often punished by severe beatings, a former forced wife of a rebel commander explained that the rape of men within the LRA was "considered unimaginable" and certainly punishable by death (*Interview, 27 April 2016*). This comparably harsher sanctioning of male sexual abuse within the LRA may be linked to the group's and Kony's spiritual beliefs and their heteronormative (and thus largely homophobic) conception of family and society. In one of these reported cases, the commander, who had several wives, was shot immediately when the LRA leadership found out he had sexually abused a male recruit (*Interview 1 March 2016*). In another instance, the sexual abuse stopped when the victimized abductee threatened to report the commander to the LRA leadership, which inevitably would have resulted in the commander's execution (*Interview, 27 April 2016*). In addition to these isolated cases of male-on-male rape, a group of counselors of a psychological support service provider working with former LRA abductees similarly reported a rare instance of continuous sexual abuse of a young male recruit by a senior female commander (*Field notes, 24 May 2016*). These few and isolated reported cases of male-directed sexual violence are likely not the only instances of sexual violence against men within the LRA and therefore, more research is needed.

### 5.4.3. Conflict Resolution and Transitional Justice

Based on this detailed account of the conflict and the dynamics of sexual violence in Northern Uganda, in this section I shift the focus to more recent attempts of conflict resolution and transitional justice developments in the current post-conflict context.

The government, to some extent supported by the international community, primarily attempted to resolve the conflict through military means, while also opting for different political solutions (Branch 2010). Therefore, the "Ugandan government's response to the LRA has shifted back and forth between negotiation and military offensives" (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010: 11). In addition to various military operations throughout the two decades long conflict (Allen 2006) and several (failed) attempts of talks and negotiations (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010), the Ugandan government in 2000 issued a blanket amnesty which aimed at encouraging rebels in the bush to renounce rebellion, lay down arms and return to civilian life without fearing punishment (see Mallinder 2009).

In late 2003, during a press conference with President Museveni and the ICC prosecutor at that time, Luis Moreno Ocampo, the Government of Uganda announced the referral of the Northern Ugandan situation to the ICC in The Hague. The Court in 2005 issued five arrest warrants against top LRA cadre, including its leader Joseph Kony and commander Dominic Ongwen,<sup>157</sup> who in early 2015 surrendered and whose trial commenced in December 2016 (Ogora 2016). The ICC indictments in the Ugandan situation sparked much scholarly debate and political concerns, and are illustrative for wider debates about *peace versus justice* in conflict-affected and transitional settings (Branch 2005; Quinn 2009).<sup>158</sup> At the same time, the ICC faced much criticism for only issuing arrest warrants against LRA commanders, while failing to investigate crimes committed by NRA soldiers and instead heavily relying on support, intelligence and information provided by the government (Apuuli 2004).

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<sup>157</sup> Of the five indictees, Joseph Kony and Dominic Ongwen are the only ones still alive.

<sup>158</sup> Since the ICC's investigation commenced in 2005, when the conflict was still ongoing, it has been argued that the Court's intervention implied the danger of constituting an obstacle to peace at the time. On the other hand, advocates of the Court have argued that justice is a pre-condition for meaningful peace and thus to be prioritized in this context. Although far more complex, these dynamics illustrate the peace versus justice question and debate (see Schulz 2011).

In addition, religious leaders and civil society representatives have long been involved in attempting to find a mutual, peaceful end to the conflict, and therefore – often with support of the international community and regional stakeholders – initiated various rounds of peace talks and negotiations (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010; Finnström 2008). Esuruku (2011) interestingly notes that, although they were masculine-dominated (Okello and Hovil 2007), these peaceful means often were regarded as feminine and incompatible with masculine ideas of militarily resolving disputes. Out of a whole variety of non-violent means of conflict resolution and different attempts of negotiations, the 2006–2008 Juba Peace Talks were seemingly the most promising initiative. The Talks lead to the signing of various separate agenda items of a peace deal, although the final peace agreement was never signed by Joseph Kony and the LRA (Baines 2010).

The separately signed agenda items nevertheless provided a framework for a cease-fire deal, an Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation (AAR), and an accord on Demobilization, Demilitarization and Reintegration (DDR). Shortly after the signing of the AAR in February 2008, the Ugandan government set up a Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) with the aim of drafting a respective policy (McDonald 2014). Essentially, these developments provided the framework for Uganda's draft national transitional justice policy, currently in its fifth draft (JLOS 2014).<sup>159</sup> Under the auspice of the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) of the Ugandan Ministry of Justice, the (draft) transitional justice policy sets out to provide "an overreaching framework of the Government of Uganda, designed to address justice, accountability and reconciliation needs of post conflict Uganda" (JLOS 2013: 3). Aimed "to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation" (*ibid.*), the policy proposes the implementation and utilization of: formal justice processes at the national and domestic level (the International Crimes Division (ICD) of the High Court of Uganda) and at the international level (the ICC); traditional justice processes; a truth-telling process; a reparations program; and amnesty (JLOS 2013: 4-5). As noted above, however, the policy is yet to be passed by Parliament, legislated and implemented (Otim and Kasanda 2015)

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<sup>159</sup> The drafting process has continuously been delayed, largely attributed to an apparent lack of political will by the Ugandan government to initiate a holistic transitional justice approach. At the same time, the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS), which is responsible for the development of the transitional justice policy, is heavily dependent upon external donor funds, much of which has been withdrawn in recent years (see McDonald 2014).

By and large, Uganda therefore constitutes a poignant example of a relatively diverse transitional justice landscape, including international criminal proceedings by the ICC, national prosecutions by the ICD (see McDonald and Porter 2016), traditional justice processes (see Baines 2007, 2010; Quinn 2007) and proposals for a state-driven and government-led draft national transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014). To what extent and how any of these diverse transitional justice mechanisms imply the potential to respond to male sexual and gendered harms is scrutinized in Chapters 7 and 8. In brief, the analysis shows that all of these different measures are characterized by gendered blind-spots and are thus irresponsive to the experiences, needs and priorities of male sexual violence survivors.

#### **5.4.4. The Current (Post-Conflict?) Situation**

Reports about the status, activities and whereabouts of the LRA vary, but generally indicate that the group operates with limited human capital, mostly in the Darfur region of Sudan, parts of the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Agger 2012; Cakaj 2016). Joseph Kony is still at large, reported to be in hiding in CAR or Darfur, and recent evidence shows that the group remains with less than 100 fighters, many of whom were recently abducted, and only few Acholi soldiers left (Cajak 2016).

In the contemporary context, Northern Uganda is frequently classified and categorized as a post-conflict context (see Okello, Dolan et al. 2012). The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), for instance, notes that the conflict in Northern Uganda has not been active anymore since 2007. Furthermore, a variety of other conflicts and armed insurgencies in the region, such as the West Nile Bank Front (WNBFF) insurgency in the West Nile region of north-western Uganda or insecurities caused by Karamojong cattle herders, primarily ceased by now. Following the Juba Peace Talks, it appears that "an unfamiliar degree of stability and order has been sustained in northern Uganda" (Allen et al. 2010: 279). The overwhelming majority of the formerly displaced population returned to their ancestral land, although often causing disputes and conflicts about land between families, clans and communities (Hopwood 2015; Pham and Vinck 2010) and the "guns have largely fallen silent", as described by one of my informants (*Field notes, 2 June 2016*). Therefore, if post-conflict is defined in relatively narrow terms as the cessation of hostilities and

fighting for at least five years, as commonly proclaimed by dominant positivistic peace and conflict research, then Northern Uganda would qualify as a post-conflict case.

Whether or not the Acholi population at large would agree with these classifications, however, is questionable and debatable. How fragile this relative peace remains can be illustrated by referring to the civilian population's perceptions and to most recent events in Northern Uganda. For instance, in mid-June 2016, the central police station in Gulu town was ambushed by what was locally suspected to be a newly formed rebel group, primarily composed of UPDF dissidents and former LRA fighters (see Chapter 2; Okello 2016). This incidence poignantly illustrates the inherent challenges of sustaining post-conflict stability and peace if conflict-related tensions and grievances are not properly addressed (through transitional justice processes), if former combatants are not adequately demobilized and re-integrated, and if militarized masculinities are not sufficiently engaged with (see Theidon 2009). In the days following the attack, towards the end of my fieldwork, I could sense the population's uncertainties and perceived insecurities. Many civilians were instantly reminded of the atmosphere and overall situation from less than ten years ago and feared that armed conflict would re-occur.

These (and other) continuous insecurities as well as various conflict-related communal conflicts, such as lingering mistrust between the Acholi population and the government, widespread land disputes among and between clans as well as with the government and commercial corporations (Hopwood 2015), led one of my informants to assess that "the conflict is not yet over, but the battlefield has only shifted from the bush to people's mindsets" (*Field notes, 1 June 2016*). These perceptions raise the need to critically question static classifications of conflict and post-conflict, which are purely based upon numbers and battle-related deaths, and which do not take into account conflict-affected communities' lived realities. These sentiments similarly apply to the majority of male sexual violence survivors who participated in this study. Many survivors report to still live in fear and suffer at times from threats, intimidations and certainly social stigmatization and exclusion as a result of their gender-specific conflict-related experiences. These lived realities in the current (*de facto* post-conflict) period thus leave my respondents and myself hesitant to fully and uncritically catalogue current-day Northern Uganda as a post-

conflict society, despite perceptions to the contrary from proportions of the conflict-affected community itself.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This chapter painted a detail picture of the extent and dynamics of sexual violence against men during the conflict in Northern Uganda, situated within wider conflict dynamics and in relation to gendered forms of violence more broadly. Since crimes of male-directed sexual violence in Acholiland remained notoriously under-explored throughout existing studies on the conflict, the examination in this chapter addressed a prevailing empirical conundrum within the literature. This chapter thereby provides the contextual groundwork for the analysis in the following chapters to unfold.

Based on original empirical field research findings, I demonstrated that crimes of sexual violence against men committed by government soldiers of the NRA between the late 1980's and early 1990's against Acholi civilian men were geographically widespread, resulting in the invention and use of a new vocabulary of *tek-gungu*. The analysis in this chapter shows that sexual violence against men in Acholiland, situated in relation to wider conflict dynamics, suggests clear strategic motives and rationales behind the perpetration of these crimes.

While this chapter includes an exploration of the gendered, sexual and sexed dimension of violence during conflict and war (Sjoberg 2016; Baaz and Stern 2013), a sustained empirically-driven yet theoretically-grounded understanding of how sexual violence against men compromises male survivors' gendered identities remains absent from the literature. Against this background, and building upon this detailed examination, in the following chapter I proceed by unpacking how sexual violence against men impacts upon male survivors' masculinities. The following chapter therefore aids our understanding of the gendered harms experienced by male survivors, which is fundamentally important for any discussion about justice in response to violence.



## **Chapter 6: 'I felt useless and not man enough' - Deconstructing Male Sexual and Gendered Harms**

### **6.1. Introduction**

Based upon the contextualization of conflict-related sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda in the previous chapter, I now more closely unpack and deconstruct male survivors' gendered harms. As outlined in the Introduction, any discussion of justice in response to violence and wrongdoing must firmly be rooted in contextual understandings of the resulting harms and how the crime is perceived in terms of its gendered physical, psychological and moral damage (Porter 2013; Teitel 2000; Douzinas 2007).

Sexual violence against men during armed conflict is predominantly theorized to compromise male survivors' masculine identities (see Chapter 3; Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010; Zarkov 2001). What throughout the literature is almost exclusively labeled as the 'emasculatation' and 'feminization' of male survivors (Alison 2007; Meger 2016a; Solangon and Patel 2012) is frequently portrayed at once as a motivation for such violence to occur as well as its primary consequence and harm (Lewis 2014). Yet how exactly such perceived processes of gender subordination (Sjoberg 2016; Sjoberg and Via 2010) and the compromising of masculinities unfold, and what they entail, is only poorly understood, hence constituting a lacuna in the literature.

Against this background, in this chapter I empirically deconstruct the gendered effects of sexual violence on Acholi male survivors' masculinities,<sup>160</sup> deriving directly from male survivors' experiences and following an ontology from below (Robins 2011). While most existing studies treat the effects on sexual violence on male survivors' masculinities in static terms and as one-time events (Alison 2007; Zarkov 2001; Sivakumaran 2005), my findings instead show that within the context of Northern Uganda, gender subordination is a dynamic and manifold process,

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<sup>160</sup> While sexual violence can lead to a multiplicity of harms (see Chapter 3), the impact on survivors' masculinities overarches with numerous other harms, such as for instance the economic and psychological impact of the violations.

initiated by acts of penetration<sup>161</sup> and further exacerbated by a myriad of layered gendered harms that subordinate male survivors through gendered disempowerment. This analysis thus contributes to an empirically-grounded and contextualized yet conceptually deconstructed understanding of male survivors' lived realities, frequently characterized by perceived experiences of "being less of a man" (*Workshop 2*). In this chapter, I therefore analyze sexual violence in more complex terms, which according to Sjöberg "can strengthen theories of wartime sexual violence" (2016: 43).

Identifying various empirical and conceptual limitations with the concepts and terminologies of 'emasculatation' and 'feminization' as utilized most prevalently throughout the literature, in this chapter, and borrowing from Edström, Dolan et al. (2016), I adopt the alternative framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood' to conceptualize the impact of wartime rape. I unpack and further develop this theoretical frame, to show how it addresses some of the constraints of the terminology of 'emasculatation', while accommodating the gendered experiences of sexual violence survivors in a more gender-inclusive, broadened and fluid capacity and without freezing dynamic experiences into time and space. By introducing and unpacking this new theoretical frame, I advance theorizing on conflict-related sexual violence and gender more broadly.

This chapter additionally contributes empirically-guided 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1983) of Acholi masculinities as a conceptual premise for my arguments, since understanding the effects of violence on gender needs to depart from a contextualized understanding of relational gender identities in the first place (see Aijazi and Baines 2017).

I open this chapter by introducing the illustrative case study of *Coo-Pee*, before offering theoretical reflections regarding the multiplicity and hierarchies of masculinities constructions across time and space, with a focus on hegemonic masculinities within hierarchical gendered power structures. Based upon these conceptual foundations, I then empirically contextualize gender constructions and relations in Acholiland, with an emphasis on Acholi hegemonic masculinities, particularly characterized by men's responsibilities to provide, protect and procreate

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<sup>161</sup> As contextualized in the previous chapter, penetrative male rape was the most common form of male-directed sexual violence as experienced by the majority of respondents.

(Dolan 2002). I then unpack the conceptual frame of 'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016), before analyzing the manifold ways that sexual violence against men and its aftermath may compromise male survivors' gendered identities, which constitutes the chapter's analytical centerpiece. Therefore, in this chapter, I present novel empirical data coupled with a systematic analysis and a theory-driven discussion.

## **6.2. *Coo-Pee* - Where 'Men are not there'**

To illuminate the manifold ways in which armed conflict impacts upon men's gender identities and to illustrate how the effects of sexual violence against men are locally understood in Northern Uganda, in this section I introduce the case study of *Coo-Pee*, the village where men (*coo*) are considered not to be there (*pee*).

*Coo-Pee* is a small rural trading centre in Bungatira sub-county, approximately 15 kilometers north of Gulu town. In Acholi language, *coo* is the plural for men, while *pee* refers to something or someone not being there (Crazzolara 1938). *Coo-Pee* can thus be understood as the place where 'men are not there'. While I heard different explanations regarding the origin and meaning of this name, one interpretation in the contemporary environment appears to dominate the contextual understanding regarding the meaning of the village's name, at least among my respondents. My aim is not to determine the *actual* meaning of the name *Coo-Pee*, which appears to have been in circulation from at least the 1950s (see Lagace 2016; Girling 1960) and appears to have varying connotations and interpretations. Rather, I aim to explore how the community makes sense of the name, in *Coo-Pee* and in Acholiland more broadly, as well as among my respondents in the contemporary context, against the backdrop of recent developments during the protracted armed conflict.

The most prevalent explanation of the meaning of the name *Coo-Pee* among my respondents is that during the early stages of the conflict, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the civilian population, and especially males, suffered most heavily from violence perpetrated by government soldiers, as contextualized in the previous chapter (see Branch 2005; Dolan 2009). Men were particularly targeted, because of stereotypical assumptions linked to masculinities, and because they were suspected of fighting the state army and joining rebel groups, or as retaliation attacks for previous episodes of conflict linked to the country's troubled political history

(Finnström 2008). As a consequence, in *Coo-Pee*, as in many other places across Acholiland, men were arrested, tortured and killed in large numbers (RLP 2014a; JRP 2013). Therefore, during that time, some men were physically absent from *Coo-Pee*. Other men remained in the village but were considered spiritually, symbolically and psychologically not to be there. Confronted with the hardships of conflict and contextualized in a continuum of severe discrepancies between socially constructed and homogenized expectations and heterogeneous phenomenological lived realities, some of these men did not perform in their socially conditioned masculine roles (also see Dolan 2002, 2011). At the same time, various other men were considered not to be there because they were, in the words of some of my respondents, 'turned into women' (FGD 6 May 2016) as a result of having been raped by government soldiers, which was thought to have heavily impacted their gendered identities (Esuruku 2012).

Kenneth, my research assistant and I, regularly passed through *Coo-Pee* on our numerous trips to other villages in the surrounding areas. However, I only learned about the apparent interpretation of the name as described here during the latter part of my fieldwork, in June 2016. During an interview with a male elder in another village in Bungatira sub-county, I noticed the translation of the name *Coo-Pee* and asked about its meaning.<sup>162</sup> Both Kenneth and our respondent explained that it means "that men were thought not to be there, because of this thing of *tek-gungu*" (Interview, 13 June 2016). On our journey back to Gulu, Kenneth elaborated in more detail the meaning of the name and his interpretation of it, reflective of the narration above.

A few days later, Kenneth and I embarked on yet another trip, which once again led us through *Coo-Pee*. Soon after we departed from Gulu town, it began to rain heavily, and partly due to the rain and the quickly worsening road conditions, we decided to seek shelter under the protective crown of one of the many large mango-trees covering the road, just a few miles outside of *Coo-Pee*. A male elder on his bicycle followed our lead and we began to talk, about football, the elections a few months earlier, and Ugandan politics in general, while sharing a few sweet and juicy mangoes. As it turned out, the *Mzee* was from *Coo-Pee*, and without yet having told

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<sup>162</sup> This particular respondent explained to us that he was originally from *Coo-Pee*, but left during the early years of the conflict, to move to Gulu town and later to a neighboring village.

him about my research, I asked him about his interpretation of the meaning of the village's name. He elaborated,

*Coo-Pee* has been known like this among the local people since a long time already. It is even the official name now. But as far as I know, it is nowadays called like this among the people, even from town, because when the Lakwena [referring to the rebels] conflict started and the NRA mobile units were active in this place, many men were arrested, tortured and killed and they used the three-pieces method.<sup>163</sup> Many other men were made to suffer like women because [the soldiers] would even rape them. That is why people now say *Coo-Pee* is the place where men are not there (*Field notes*, 22 June 2016).

Identical versions of this story have thereafter been repeated to me, by several respondents in *Coo-Pee* and Gulu town alike and independent from each other, even though I have heard at least one alternative explanation linked to the contemporary context.<sup>164</sup> The example of *Coo-Pee* illustrates how socially constructed expectations surrounding masculinities can render men vulnerable (Carpenter 2003, 2006), while simultaneously illuminating a myriad of ways in which Acholi men were impacted during the conflict (see Dolan 2009; Myrntinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra 2014). The case furthermore exemplifies that sexual violence against men is often theorized, experienced and perceived as compromising male victims' gendered identities (Sivakumaran 2005), which constitutes the focus of the analysis throughout the remainder of this chapter.

### 6.3. Theoretical Reflections - Conceptualizing Masculinities

An important theoretical premise for my arguments is that processes of (perceived) gender subordination are highly circumstantial in nature, and must be positioned in relation to contextual constructions of gender. Any attempt of understanding what it means to be perceived or considered "less of a man" (*Workshop 3*) thus needs to be

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<sup>163</sup> The three-piece method, or *kandooya* in Acholi (see Dolan 2011), "is a form of torture in which the arms are tied tightly behind the back at the wrists and elbows. *Kandooya* strains the chest and impedes breathing, and sometimes severely damages the nerves of the arms" (Behrend 1999: 34). To the extent of my knowledge, men have been predominantly targeted by this method (see Dolan 2011).

<sup>164</sup> According to another explanation in addition to the interpretation provided here, *Coo-Pee* is short for "coo mono pe kwene?", which translates as "where do you think the men are / do you think the men are not here?", which was subsequently shortened into *Coo-Pee*. According to this version of the origin and meaning of the name, in the mid 1990s, men in the village formed a local defense unit to protect themselves from increasing rebel attacks, as communities all over Acholiland did (Finnström 2008), which they provocatively called "Coo mono pe kwene?", later on shortened into *Coo-Pee*.

firmly rooted in a prior conceptual and empirical understanding of what it means to be a man in the socio-cultural context in the first place (Dowd 2010). Before conceptualizing locally-contingent constructions of Acholi masculinities, I theoretically reflect upon the multiplicities and contingencies of masculinities across time and space (see Gilmore 1990), particularly focusing on inherent hierarchical power structures and hegemonic forms of masculinity (Connell 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005), including some critiques regarding the concept (see Beasley 2008; Demetriou 2001; Hamber 2016).

### **6.3.1. Defining Masculinities**

Quite generally, masculinities are socially constructed gender norms that refer to "anything which is associated with being a man in any given culture. Interpretations of what is considered to be masculine, and what constitutes being a man, vary across time and space, as well as between and within cultures" (Wright 2014: 4). The seminal work by R.W. Connell (1995, 2002) provides particularly useful and applicable theoretical frameworks for understanding the multiplicities and variations of masculinities, which encourage us to speak of masculinities in plural, as well as for conceptualizing the inherent power relations within and between masculinities and gender hierarchies more widely.<sup>165</sup> Some key developments of masculinities theorizing arguably include the realization that masculinity is not unitary (Dowd 2008), and that different forms of masculinities exist across time and space, implying power differences and hierarchies (Connell 1995).

Connell (2002) establishes that masculinities are dynamic and imply the capacity to evolve over time and within spaces. Masculinities constructions are therefore far from being universally applicable or static (see Silberschmidt 2001), but vary across and within cultures and contexts (Dowd 2010). Gilmore's (1990) extensive ethnographic research on cultural concepts of manhood across a variety of settings evidences that masculinities are characterized by spatial and geographical contingencies (also see Berg and Longhurst 2003). In particular historians and anthropologists have convincingly demonstrated that what it means to be a man and to perform and embody masculinities varies over time, context and culture, and most

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<sup>165</sup> Due to the defining nature of Connell's work for masculinities scholarship in general, in this section I heavily build on Connell (1995, 2002, 2005) while nevertheless consulting and supplementing via a variety of additional influential sources and authors.

often even within spaces (Gilmore 1990; Porter 2013b; Silberschmidt 2005; Ratele 2008). It is therefore necessary to acknowledge that "masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action, and therefore, can differ according to gender relations in a particular social setting" (Porter 2013b: 488). Masculinities should thus be understood in comparative and regional terms (*ibid.*).

Despite these understandings of the fluidities and specificities of masculinities, however, most theorizing is based on western ideas of manhood, and particularly on white, middle-class and college-educated men in the US, UK and Australia (see Connell 2002). Conditioned by these biases, there is a distinct lack of empirical and conceptual work about non-Western and non-white men and masculinities. By referring to Africanist gender theorists (see Ratele 2008; Onyango 2012; Esuruku 2012; Lwambo 2013) in my examination of Acholi masculinities, I seek to respond to this gap.

### **6.3.2. Hierarchies of Manhood: Hegemonic Masculinity**

In addition to these spatial, temporal and cultural contingencies, significant power differences between and within gender constructions exist (Connell 1995),<sup>166</sup> and not all forms of masculinities are valued equally (Dowd 2010). Within these multiple versions of manhood, some interpretations of being a man "are prized as being more valuable to aspire to than others" (Wright 2014: 4). As argued by Connell (1995), the conception of manhood that appears culturally dominant is labeled as hegemonic masculinity, in relation to which various subordinate and subversive notions of masculinities exist (see Dowd 2010). Masculinities are therefore relational within and among themselves, as well as in relation to the gender order as a whole (Connell 2002). Connell (1995: 68) in fact emphasizes that masculinities cannot exist but in contrast to femininities.<sup>167</sup> Gender constructions in general furthermore relate to and intersect with other social characteristics, such as class, race, sexual orientation and age, hence necessitating an intersectional analysis (Crenshaw 1989).

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<sup>166</sup> It is important to acknowledge that gender can be seen as fluid and comprising a spectrum, rather than two dichotomous and easily discernible categories (Sjoberg 2016: 13). However, because of the heteronormative categorization into femininities and masculinities within the Acholi cultural context (see Dolan 2009), I focus on dichotomous portrayals of masculinities and femininities respectively.

<sup>167</sup> This contrast, however, presents gender identities as binaries, thereby ignoring a whole variety of potential non-binary identities.

Within these relations, and in most societal contexts globally, the hegemonic model of masculinity is seen as "an expression of the privilege men collectively have over women" (Connell 2002: 15) as well as over subordinate or less powerful men (Dowd 2008; Demetriou 2001). In this reading, hegemonic masculinities stand at the top of the gender hierarchy (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005), above other complicit, subordinated and marginalized masculinities, and certainly above femininities, let alone gender non-conforming, trans\* or queer identities (see Ahmed 2016). The theoretical frame of hegemonic masculinity is therefore important to deal with relational and power aspects of masculinities and gender (Connell 1995). Cleaver (2002) observes that "not all men benefit equally from institutions of patriarchy and that some forms of masculinity are culturally elevated above others in certain times and places" (9). However, although culturally dominant and most aspired to, the hegemonic form does not necessarily need to be the most common form of masculinity (Connell 2002).

Just as masculinities in general change over time (Silberschmidt 2001), the particular nature and characteristics of hegemonic masculinities change too. When ideas of hegemonic masculinities change over time, so must the attributes and behaviors to achieve such hegemony adapt (Porter 2013b). Myrntinen et al. argue (2016), "what counts as hegemonic is not fixed but is constantly subject to contestation and alteration" (5). This potential for hegemonic ideas of masculinities to evolve can be particularly pronounced in post-conflict contexts and in times of transition from war to peace, due to the variety of potential external influences and the changing nature of society. At the same time, the form of hegemonic masculinity, including its attributes and traits, is often aspired to, but less frequently actually realized, therefore suggesting a discrepancy between masculine ideals and the daily lived realities of most men (see Hollander 2014), especially during great economic, political and social upheaval (Pankhurst 2008). Widespread violence, militarization and displacement make it almost impossible for most men to realize a hegemonic state of masculinity, which nevertheless prevails, and which most men are socialized to aspire to (Dolan 2011; see below). In many ways, these discrepancies expose a seeming paradox between strongly pronounced and homogenous expectations vis-à-vis heterogeneous lived realities.



### ***Critical Perspectives on Hegemonic Masculinity Conceptions***

While the concept of hegemonic masculinity has "influenced gender studies across many academic fields" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 829) and is utilized by most existing masculinities scholarship (see Kimmel, Hearn and Connell 2004), various scholars have nevertheless articulated a number of critiques, highlighting different shortcomings of the concept and especially its applicability (Myrntinen et al 2016; Demetriou 2001; Hamber 2016; Beasley 2008). In this sub-section, I scrutinize existing criticism in the literature regarding the utility of the hegemonic masculinity concept, especially regarding its explanatory value in non-Western and (post-)conflict settings and regarding false equations of violence and hegemony (Hollander 2014). In discussing these criticisms, I make the observation that most critiques in the literature seem to refer to the application of the hegemonic masculinity frame in a globalized world, or relate to conflating notions of hegemonic masculinity with narrow understandings of the concept,<sup>168</sup> rather than to Connell's concept directly (see Beasley 2008).

Firstly, critical scholarship has evidenced prevailing conceptual and analytical gaps associated with the hegemonic masculinity frame and its western-centric conceptions of manhood (Connell 2002; Hearn 2004), especially "as the term goes global" (Beasley 2008: 91) and is increasingly employed in non-Western and conflict-affected settings (Kimmel, Hearn and Connell 2004). Hollander (2014) proclaims that "Connell's classification of masculinities is inadequate for the analysis of clear crisis situations" (417), losing "some of its analytical value in situations of extreme distress" (419). According to Hollander, Connell's theorization of hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalized masculinities "inadequately captures the complexities of situations of enduring crisis" (*ibid.*). Hollander therefore argues that new subcategories of manhood conceptions need to be added (*ibid.*). In concert with this critique, Myrntinen et al. (2016) similarly emphasize that particularly in conflict-affected contexts, the notion of hegemonic masculinities "needs to be re-examined and re-articulated in more nuanced ways" (1).

I agree that indeed caution is required not too uncritically and universally apply Connell's framework, particularly because it was developed in western contexts and

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<sup>168</sup> This conflation often falsely posits that hegemonic masculinity is the same as violent masculinity.

based upon the lived realities of mostly white, Western men (Hearn 2004). I therefore concur with Hollander (2014) that Connell's framework *may* under certain circumstances be inapplicable to *some* situations of crises, extreme distress and conflict. At the same time, however, the concept may prove to be applicable in other situations, if qualified and applied with sensitivity to the context. For example, and depending on context, the hegemonic masculinity frame might be even more stratified in non-western and conflict-affected settings. The mixture of repressive and patriarchal gender orders, combined with insecurity and armed conflict, can in some contexts imply that "the possibility of multiple, parallel and equivalent masculinities collapses" (Dolan 2011: 127), which in turn can cement new and contextually relevant hegemonic masculinity (*ibid.*; Porter 2013b). This seems to be the case in Northern Uganda, as I show in the next section (see Dolan 2002). In other words, Connell's classification cannot wholesomely be applied to all conflict situations across the globe, but may be applicable in certain conflict settings, depending on contextual and circumstantial factors.

Secondly, although the concept of hegemonic masculinity is intended to highlight which forms of masculinities take on a dominant character at any given time and place (Connell 2002), the concept is nevertheless frequently misused to oversimplistically foreground "negative 'types' of violent and/or militarized masculinities" (Myrttinen et al. 2016: 4). According to Martin (1998), this severely undermines the concept's applicability and utility. Myrttinen et al. (2016) observe that the frame of hegemonic masculinity is frequently used imprecisely with regards to conflict-affected situations, thus often re-producing a premise assuming that violent, military and hyper-masculinities are hegemonic. This misleading association results in a false conflation of hegemony with violence and militarization, often presenting the relationship between violence and masculinities as natural (Wright 2014). Most scholarship therefore focuses on men's violence, leaving out non-violent masculinities "and the men and boys embodying these [non-violent] masculinities" (Myrttinen et al. 2016: 2). Connell (1995) explains, however, that it is "the successful claim to authority, more than direct violence that is the mark of hegemony" (77). Violence and militarization thus do not ubiquitously qualify as hegemony in any given context. With my examination of the model of normative hegemonic masculinity in Acholiland below (Dolan 2002, 2011), I likewise show that in this

particular social and cultural context, hegemony in relation to manhood does not necessitate violence, but is instead centered around other attributes and behaviors.

Therefore, despite these valuable critiques regarding the conceptual and analytical applicability of the concept of hegemonic masculinity in some cases, a dominant model of manhood (or hegemonic masculinity) nevertheless appears to prevail in Northern Uganda, as previously identified by Dolan (2009). In the following section, I turn towards this contemporary contextual construction of hegemonic masculinity in the Acholi context.

#### **6.4. Empirical Contextualization - Acholi Gender Identities**

Building on the work of Dolan (2002, 2009, 2011) and others (see Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014; Onyango 2012; Esuruku 2011) and enriched by my findings, in this section I provide 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1983) of Acholi gender identities and (hegemonic) masculinities. I position Acholi masculinities in relation to contextual gender relations and constructions, including femininity identities. I argue that a model of normative hegemonic masculinity prevails in Northern Uganda (see Dolan 2011), to which the majority of men are taught to aspire. Acholi hegemonic masculinity is primarily characterized by men's responsibilities to protect and provide for their families, and centered around notions of heteronormativity and patrilocality and patrilineality (Dolan 2002).

Even though significant variations exist between different conceptions of manhood in Northern Uganda - defined by class, ethnicity, socio-economic background and locality (urban vs. rural), hence necessitating an intersectional analysis of gender (Crenshaw 1989) - one dominant model of manhood continues to prevail (Dolan 2011). Drawing upon research in the eastern territories of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lwambo (2013) and Hollander (2014) both likewise observe that despite overall variations and heterogeneities of masculinities' constructions (see Hearn 2004), various common ideals of manhood can exist across ethnicities, classes or social environments (Lwambo 2013), thus creating a dominant hegemonic form of masculinity. It appears that this is also the case in Northern Uganda (Dolan 2002; Esuruku 2011; Onyango 2012).

Dolan's seminal work (2002, 2011) evidences the prevalence of common denominators of hegemonic ideals of manhood for Acholi men, setting clear parameters for what it means to be (considered) masculine in a hegemonic manifestation in the Northern Ugandan context. The majority of Acholi men are socialized into this model and judged and evaluated against it (Esuruku 2011) by themselves, their families and communities as well as by the state and wider society (Dolan 2011). As I elaborate below, Dolan (2011) asserts that especially during conflict, "the possibility of multiple parallel and equivalent masculinities collapse[d]" (127), with a hegemonic form of masculinity manifesting itself above a hierarchy of lesser masculinities (*ibid.*).<sup>169</sup> Although Acholi gender constructions and understandings of masculinities are non-static and developed over time, and partly differ between rural and urban settings (see Onyango 2012), this hegemonic conception of masculinity largely remains intact in the contemporary context, resulting in growing discrepancies between homogenized expectations and heterogeneous lived realities (see Dolan 2002). Throughout the remainder of this section, I deconstruct this prevalent form of Acholi hegemonic masculinity and foreground its defining characteristics.

#### **6.4.1. Acholi Gender Relations and Constructions of Gendered Personhood**

Comparable to other societies in East Africa (Silberschmidt 2011) and sub-Saharan Africa more broadly (Baker and Ricardo 2005), conceptions of manhood in Northern Uganda must be situated within wider heteronormative, patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal gender orders (Alava 2016; Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014; Porter 2016). These relationships imply clear gendered power structures among and across multiple gender identities, with a hegemonic masculinity model at the top of the hierarchy. The relations are especially pronounced between masculinities and femininities, resulting in vast gendered inequalities.

Acholi gender identities and related conceptions of manhood also need to be situated in wider social relations (p'Bitek 1986), which in turn depend on contextual

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<sup>169</sup> This empirical observation (see Dolan 2002) suggests that the model of hegemonic masculinity, although developed outside the context of violence and war and based upon Western men and masculinities (see Hearn 2008), might be even more stratified and pronounced in non-Western and conflict-affected settings.

constructs of personhood (Strathern 1992).<sup>170</sup> Building upon Acholi scholar and poet Okot p'Bitek (1986), Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin (2014) emphasize that "conceptual categories of personhood and sociality, while fluid, necessarily impact human practice and social organization through time" (286). In the case of Acholi identity, such personhood and sociality is relational and rests upon social collectivism and communal structuring. In essence, an individual's existence and humanity emerges from their connections to others (*ibid.*: p'Bitek 1986: 19-20).

The relational and collective constructions of personhood are captured by the Acholi cultural concepts of '*dano adana*' (Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014) and '*bedo dano*' (Komakech 2012). As contextualized by various informants, these cultural concepts imply that a singular person can only exist in relation to a community of people, while at the same time also dictating certain forms of normative behavior (*Interviews, 19 April, 2 May 2016*). Despite their relational and communal aspect of society, especially the concept of '*dano adana*' also refer to 'a real human being' that knows his or her duties (Apoko 1967; Baines and Rosenoff Gauvin 2014), including with regards to gender roles, identities, behaviors and expectations. In Acholi language and within the context of these concepts, '*bedo*' refers to 'being' or 'to be', while '*dano*' circumstantially refers to a person in singular or people in plural (Crazzolara 1938). '*Bedo dano*' thus refers to the ways of being a person, or of constructing personhood.

What it means to be a (good) person or a 'real human being' (*dano adana*) for women and for men in Acholi therefore shapes how femininities and masculinities are defined. A cultural leader representing the Acholi cultural institution Ker Kwaro Acholi (KKA) told me that "what it means to be a good person, '*dano adana*', for a woman and for a man in Acholi influences how femininities and masculinities are constructed" (*Interview, 2 May 2016*). Deriving from these conceptual and empirical observations, I argue that one dictated or hegemonic premise of being a good person in Acholi society prevails for women and men respectively. Such constructions and expectations of gendered personhood thus result in normative hegemonic models of gender identities in general, including of masculinities (Dolan 2002), which impede the emergence of alternative conceptions.

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<sup>170</sup> This organic link between gender identities and constructions of personhood becomes particularly relevant for the development of the theoretical framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016), which I introduce below.

#### 6.4.2. Acholi Femininities

Connell (1995) emphasizes that masculinities cannot exist but in contrast with femininities.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, to conceptualize Acholi masculinities, a prior relational understanding of "what women are (supposed to be) like" (Dolan 2009: 192) in Northern Uganda proves necessary. This section focuses on the dominant and hegemonic construction of Acholi femininity, as prevalent during the conflict and in the contemporary context.<sup>172</sup>

External influences in Acholiland, including colonization, the armed conflict (Myrtilinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra 2014) and globalization (and Westernization) have shaped and impacted how femininities are constructed. In particular, during the conflict and within the context of forced displacement, women often took on (masculinized) roles of provider and breadwinner, as men were often unable or prevented from doing so (El-Bushra and Sahl 2005; see further below), although these roles and responsibilities were often reverted again after the conflict (El-Bushra and Sahl 2005; *Interview, 17 March 2016*). Comparable to constructions of masculinities, Acholi femininities are generally dynamic and manifold and differences exist, amongst others, between classes or urban and rural settings. Nevertheless, despite these variations, one hegemonic premise of 'being a woman' appears to dominate both the traditional as well as the contemporary context, as examined throughout this section.

In Acholiland's patriarchal, heteronormative (Porter 2013a; Alava 2016) and patrilocal society (Rosenoff-Gauvin 2013), a widely held assumption prevails that women differ from men in that they are "weaker, incapable and a burden" (Dolan 2009: 61). Across historical and contemporary Acholiland, it is relatively widely believed "that women cannot perform to the level of men, and must confirm to the culture of their husbands" (Dolan 2009: 192). Indeed, through marriage and once the

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<sup>171</sup> Constructions of gender, in Acholiland as well as throughout the literature more broadly, are therefore frequently presented in binary terms. Feminist scholars in particular have increasingly challenged this representation, and feminist theorizing has well demonstrated the multiplicity of gender identities beyond binary and two-level classifications (see Ahmed 2016).

<sup>172</sup> While there is variety and exceptions to this dominant construction of Acholi femininity, the model explained here constitutes the idealized gender construction to which the vast majority of women are taught to aspire in a hegemonic sense.

full bride-wealth has been paid (see Porter 2013a), via an elaborate *cuna*<sup>173</sup> process (Baines and Rosenoff Gauvin 2014), the woman is expected to leave her parental family and move to the husband's home, "where she is considered the subordinate and the property/asset of the husband" (Dolan 2009: 193), evidencing the patrilineal and patrilocal character of Acholi society (Rosenoff Gauvin 2013). Following the bride-wealth payment, the man's lineage agrees to politically and legally include the woman into their family or lineage and to properly provide for her (e.g. through the provision of land, a kitchen-hut, granaries, etc.) (Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014: 288).

In Acholi language, the word for woman, '*dako*', derives from the verb '*dak*', which loosely translates as 'to migrate' (see Crazzolara 1938), reflecting the relational aspect between men and women, the movement character defining Acholi gender relations and the expectation of women to migrate into their husbands' homes. Movement indeed quite clearly defines feminine identity constructions: in Acholi culture, women are expected to move, or to migrate, from their paternal home to their husbands' compound (and in the case of separation or divorce, back into their paternal home). Once a woman marries, she *de facto* loses her own clan identity, without fully assuming or inheriting her new husband's clan identity either (Dolan 2002: 61), further evidencing the patriarchal and patri-local system.

Acholi femininities are furthermore closely linked to motherhood and marriage. Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin (2014) emphasize that a woman's "process of 'becoming a person' is assumed through the birth of children within a formalized marriage [...]" (293) and that a "woman's status as mother, therefore, defines her social role in her (adopted) home village" (*ibid.*: 288-289). Motherhood can thus be seen as embodying the Acholi female *dano adana*: the attainment of gendered personhood (*ibid.*: 293). Despite motherhood, female personhood is furthermore defined by care-taking responsibilities and feminized activities designated for women, such as cooking, cleaning or the day-to-day management of the family compound (*ibid.*: 287). Characteristic for patriarchal gender orders, women are therefore reduced into the private sphere, while men occupy and dominate public spaces, setting the political, social and cultural parameters for the social order while

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<sup>173</sup> A *cuna* process is the "traditional Acholi courtship culminating in the payment of bridewealth" (Baines and Rosenoff Gauvin 2014: 288). *Cuna* means that a young man marries a woman following the complete knowledge, support and approval by the lineages of both families (*ibid.*).

simultaneously installing and asserting male dominance (see Enloe 2004; Nagel 1998).

#### **6.4.3. Acholi Hegemonic Masculinity**

The dominant notion of manhood in Northern Uganda rests upon and constitutes a *normative hegemonic* model of masculinity (Dolan 2009). Dolan asserts that this social construction is *hegemonic* in that it precludes any alternative forms of masculinities while at the same time being underpinned and sustained by significant forms of societal and political power (*ibid.*: 196). At the same time, the model qualifies as *normative* in that men (and women) are socialized into it. Society at large is taught that men should strive to achieve these defining components of masculinity. Not only men themselves, but also their families, communities, the state and wider society judge, evaluate and assess men's behavior and performance against this framework of hegemonic masculinity (Dolan 2009; Esuruku 2011).

Amongst a variety of factors, the recent LRA conflict (and related post-conflict dynamics) in Northern Uganda contributed towards manifesting this hegemonic model, in that it precludes alternative forms of masculinities to emerge or sustain (Dolan 2011: 127). In this capacity, the frame of Acholi hegemonic masculinity also constitutes a political construct and weapon at the disposal of national political forces, the state, the military and churches in Uganda (Dolan 2011). As argued by Dolan, "the Ugandan state severely aggravated the collapse of potential multiple masculinities through its simultaneous practices of militarization and forcible internal displacement" (*ibid.*: 128). Christian churches, and in particular the Catholic Church, furthermore cemented this hegemonic ideal of manhood, by holding it static and enforcing associated stereotypical assumptions about gender roles and relations in Uganda (see Alava 2016).

#### ***Manhood in the Making: External Influences on the Contemporary Model of Hegemonic Masculinity***

A variety of external factors, including colonial influences, Christianization, globalization and armed conflict(s) have influenced and shaped Acholi gender identities in general, including how masculinities are constructed and expectations placed on men (Dolan 2009; Alava 2016). Despite these external influences,



however, a common set of responsibilities and roles dominates not only historical constructions of manhood but also current idea(l)s and expectation, thus constructing the model of normative hegemonic masculinity in the contemporary context.

Overall, this model of hegemonic masculinity originates from constructions of sociality and personhood, as deconstructed above. The model must also be positioned in relation to a mixture of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial influences (Dolan 2009) that resulted in what can broadly be referred to as a hybrid-hegemonic form of normative masculinity (Hollander 2014). Comparable to, for instance, developments in the Eastern DRC (see Lwambo 2013; Hollander 2014), the influence of colonization in Northern Uganda did not necessarily result in the holistic collapse of indigenous gender orders, but rather "induced a hybridity between traditional and modern notions of hegemonic masculinity" (Hollander 2014: 421). Africanist gender theorists and ethnographers have previously observed colonizers' attempts to shape gender identities (Barker and Ricardo 2005; Silberschmidt 2005; Lwambo 2013; Ratele 2008; Gilmore 1990). Throughout most of colonized sub-Saharan Africa, colonial administrators endeavored to construct an African masculinity that remained subordinate and colonized to the imperialists' and colonialists' notions of manhood (Hollander 2014). Dolan (2009) similarly notes that in constructing contextual masculinities, "it is important to pay due heed to the undermining of men's sense of self in the colonial period" (128) by the colonial administration.

At the same time, the growing influence of Christianity and especially the Catholic church (p'Bitek 1971), a by-product of colonialism (Atkinson 1994) and in itself intensely male-centric and patriarchal (Alava 2016), furthermore entrenched heteronormative patriarchy in Acholi society, substantiated on a hegemonic model of masculinity.<sup>174</sup> Alava (2016) argues that the heteronormative and patriarchal gender order of the Catholic tradition "found a fertile ground in customary Acholi gender notions"(45).

### ***Defining Elements of Acholi Hegemonic Masculinity***

If masculinities are defined in contrast with femininities, as argued by Connell (1995) and others (Dolan 2002; Dowd 2008; Nagel 1998), then it logically follows

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<sup>174</sup> See Alava 2016 for a detailed discussion of these dynamics and how this plays out in the contemporary context.

that men in Northern Uganda are "supposed to be richer, stronger, more capable, knowledgeable and skilled [and] trustworthy [...]" (Dolan 2009: 194) than women. As is characteristic for patriarchal societies, men enjoy clear benefits in various dimensions of social life, including access to land and education, and men and boys are generally regarded as brighter and better in most aspects when compared to girls (Dolan 2002; Esuruku 2011). Being a man also entails being responsible, patient, moderate, respectful, serious and effective, but also reproductive and sexually active, among others (Onyango 2012).

Constructions of masculinities and the hierarchical gender order as a whole are furthermore naturalized through social practice (Finnström 2009: 64). Ethnographic research by Finnström (2009) for instance demonstrates that according to Acholi sociality, "men are more able to resist", while "women are weak" (64). Finnström illustrates this by referring to funerals, "in which women are allowed to cry and publicly express their agony while men are discouraged from doing so" (*ibid.*). My own observations further exemplify these gendered behavioral patterns: at the funeral of my friend's sister, mourning female relatives of the deceased cried intensely at the grave, while my male friend and other male relatives made sure not to display any emotions in public. "I have to remain strong and cope like a man", my friend said, while facing obvious difficulties of withholding tears and controlling his emotions for the sake of remaining, or appearing, masculine (*Field notes, 3 May 2016*).

### ***Primary Masculine Responsibilities: To Provide and To Protect***

During focus group discussions (FGDs) with male elders, respondents repeatedly emphasized that "men must be strong, wise, knowledgeable and respected, and they must provide and protect for their families" (*FGD, 5 May 2016*). This observation echoes the assessment of a male cultural leader who confirmed that "the cardinal roles and responsibilities of men in Acholi are to provide and to protect and defend the family" (*Interview, 3 May 2016*). While a whole variety of external factors and influences, including globalization, arguably influenced the means to do so, which further differ between urban and rural localities, the responsibilities for men to provide and protect prevailed over time and remain intact in the contemporary context. In addition to protecting and defending their families and wider communities, Acholi men are also expected to provide protection for the family's

homestead, which is the center of Acholi cosmology (see p'Bitek 1986; Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014) and therefore supposed to be impenetrable, private and secure (*FGD, 6 May 2016*; Odoch Pido 2000). In this capacity, men are primarily expected to ensure physical protection, from violence, attacks or armed robberies.

The primary social requirements for achieving hegemonic masculinity are therefore the provision for and physical protection of the household (Dolan 2009), following the attainment of some level of financial independence, wealth and preferably employment (Esuruku 2011), coupled with marriage and starting a family. As further elaborated by one of my interlocutors, in Acholi, "the accumulation of wealth is the central epitome of manhood" (*Interview, 19 April 2016*) as it consequentially allows men to provide materially and economically for their family and to offer physical protection. "Accumulating wealth constitutes an integral step towards achieving and fulfilling your responsibilities and duties as a man", my respondent summarized (*Interview, 19 April 2016*). These defining characteristics of Acholi manhood correspond with constructions of masculinities on the African continent more widely (Ratele 2008). African gender theorists have outlined how self-sufficiency, financial independence and familial provision and protection are paramount characteristics for and among the most consistent measures of sub-Saharan African masculinities (Barker and Ricardo 2005; Lwambo 2013; Silberschmidt 2007).

### ***Socialization into Manhood: Marriage and Masculinity***

Acholi manhood is also defined in contrast with youth (Dolan 2002, 2009), and an integral component of being a man is a successful transition from youth to adulthood via the medium of marriage. Boys graduate to adulthood and therefore to manhood by marrying, and the full achievement of masculinity is "impossible without making the transition to adulthood by way of marriage and thereby making the difference between youth and adults" (Dolan 2009: 196).<sup>175</sup> In fact, merely being a provider is insufficient for the comprehensive realization of hegemonic masculinity: "a man has to be a *married* provider" (Dolan 2009: 196), preferably formalized with children.

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<sup>175</sup> An Acholi proverb colorfully illustrates this inter-dependence between marriage and masculinity: '*Labot kilwongo ka dek wi kot* - A bachelor is called to a meal in the rain'. According to Okot p'Bitek (1985), "the proverb reflects the attitude of the Acholi towards unmarried young men" (7). p'Bitek explains that "to be seen running through the rain to go for a meal was considered undignified. But since unmarried men lived in the boys' hut, *otogo*, they had to go for their meals wherever they were prepared" (*ibid.*). According to this proverb and its interpretation, unmarried men were not yet considered to be real men in the hegemonic and normative sense.

Various friends and colleagues often critically remarked that even though I was able to provide for myself, I was not yet considered a real man, because during my fieldwork period, I was not yet married nor did I have children. Fortunately, during the write-up period of this dissertation in 2017, some of these elements changed, thus allowing my transition into Acholi hegemonic masculinity. When in April 2017, I phoned my research assistant to share with him the happy news about the birth of our daughter, he seemed relieved: "You are a real man now - congratulations."

During the conflict in Northern Uganda, however, men were confronted with substantial challenges that hindered their paths towards marriage, and thus manhood. The conflict made it almost impossible for young men to become financially secure enough to marry (Dolan 2002). Dolan (2009) observes that "the economic basis of the hegemonic combination of marriage and the subsequent provision and protection of the household was substantially worsened by the war" (199). In particular, the large-scale forced displacement of up to 95 per cent of the Acholi population into IDP camps (Boas and Hatloy 2005; Whyte et al. 2012), characterized by a considerable lack of income-generating and agricultural opportunities (Branch 2011), installed significant constraints on men's abilities to accumulate wealth and thus afford marriage. Neither Dolan (2009) nor Finnström (2008), who both have conducted extensive research in Northern Uganda since the late 1990's, witnessed or came across even a single wedding inside the protected villages. This inability to marry during the conflict heavily impacted upon the ability of men to achieve the defining requirements of adulthood and manhood, and thus impacted upon their masculine identities. Masculinities constructions and associated expectations, however, did not rigorously change as a result of these widespread inability of men to marry, and during the conflict as well as in the current post-conflict phase, marriage remains closely associated with and connected to hegemonic Acholi masculinity.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Although there is a lack of systematic research on the rates and frequency of weddings in the post-conflict setting, my research observations indicate that in the contemporary context, wedding rates increased significantly. While working in Northern Uganda between 2011 and 2012, I attended two weddings. During my research in 2016, I have attended one and have heard of several weddings taking place across the sub-region.

## *Masculinities and Sexuality*

Comparable to constructions of manhood elsewhere globally (Ratele 2006), notions of Acholi masculinity are furthermore shaped and enacted by heterosexuality and sex. Porter's (2013) ethnographic research in Acholiland shows that "sexual relationships with women [are] a medium by which [men] establish and perform their own masculinity in relation to their peers" (183). Porter further observes that sex "is an enactment of gender relationships and what it means to be a man or to be a woman through social practice" (*ibid.*: 184). Sex therefore plays an important role in men's relationships to each other, and men amongst themselves frequently speak about heterosexual relations (*ibid.*). Porter describes that one of her male respondents estimated that sex "was usually about 90 percent of what he and other Acholi men talk about when they get together" (*ibid.*: 183). My own observations and interactions with male Acholi colleagues and friends mirror Porter's assessment regarding the centrality of sex and sexuality in embodying and enacting masculinity in relation to male peers, often through sex being the primary topic of conversation.<sup>177</sup> Masculinity is thus shaped by foregrounding and highlighting ones' heterosexuality and sexual virility.

Homosexuality is legally and politically outlawed and criminalized in Uganda (Alava 2016), and the country's Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2014 attempted to enshrine into law the punishment of same-sex relations with the death penalty. Following international and donor-driven pressure, the Act was annulled by the Constitutional Court, but homosexuality in Uganda remains criminalized and punishable by life in prison.<sup>178</sup> Culturally and societally, homo-sexuality is also considered to be "an abnormality and not socially acceptable" (*Interview, 17 February 2016*). Acholi gender constructions in general and masculinities in particular are therefore inherently heteronormative, based upon heterosexism and homophobia (Dolan 2009: 196). As conceptualized by Dowd (2008), masculinity can therefore be defined in imperative negatives as not being gay. In relation to sexuality, masculinity is furthermore defined by and dependent upon sexual virility and re-productivity, and

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<sup>177</sup> At least in my company, men seldom spoke about sex with their wives, but rather about sex with their numerous 'girlfriends' or 'side-dishes', how casual (female) sexual partners were often referred to.

<sup>178</sup> The bill was passed by the Parliament of Uganda on 20 December 2013, and signed into law by President Museveni on 24 February 2014, but declared invalid by the Constitutional Court of Uganda on 1 August 2014. The anti-homosexuality law attempted to broaden the criminalization of homosexuality from life in prison to the death penalty.

fathering children (and preferably a boy as first-born) makes a man (*FGD, 6 May 2016*).

### ***Hegemony through Violence?***

Myrttinen et al. (2016) demonstrate that in relation to manhood, hegemony is often falsely assumed to equate with violence, and Acholi masculinity in particular is frequently portrayed to be inherently violent, both within Ugandan society and throughout the literature (see Finnström 2008; Esuruku 2011). Esuruku (2011) for instance classifies "risk-taking, physical toughness, aggression and violence" (26) as defining elements and ingredients of hegemonic masculinity in the Acholi context. I argue that these portrayals are in part based upon and simultaneously responsible for ethnocentrism and stereotypical portrayals of Acholi men as warriors and war-prone (Finnström 2008). These misleading portrayals sit uneasily with Acholi men's self-identifications and perceptions (Dolan 2009) and are influenced by colonial and post-colonial policies of playing out the country's regions against each other (see Chapter 5.2; Finnström 2008). Even though providing physical protection occupies a prime role in the construction of Acholi manhood, Dolan (2009) argues that the use of violence is in fact not a defining element of the model of hegemonic Acholi masculinity.

As theoretically reflected upon earlier, across time and space, "hegemony does not necessarily require violence", and "the use of physical violence is often not viewed societally as a hallmark of respectable or hegemonic masculinity" (Myrttinen et al. 2016: 5). Mirroring observations by Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2010) and others (Wright 2014), in the Acholi context, being a member of the military or a military-like institution or behaving particularly violently is not necessarily the most hegemonic, nor the most accepted or respected, form of masculinity (see Dolan 2009; Myrttinen et al. 2016). Violent men, and especially soldiers and combatants, are often equated with lower levels of education and thus occupy subordinate masculinities. At the same time, state combatants, and especially members of different vigilante groups (see Tapscott 2017), are comparatively poorly remunerated, and frequently not paid for months, thus often lacking the financial means to provide for their families. In contrast, bureaucrats, businessmen or staff and representatives of international organizations, for instance, are seen as the epitome of

the ability to provide financially and materially for (and thus also to ensure the protection of) one's family (also see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2009), thereby striving for hegemony.

#### **6.4.4. The Impact of Conflict on Acholi Hegemonic Masculinities**

In many ways, however, this contemporary and customary homogenized expectation stands in stark contrast to the heterogeneity and vast diversity of most men's lived realities (Dolan 2002, 2009; Esuruku 2011; Myrntinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra 2014). Comparable to many developing (Cornwall, Edström and Greig 2011; Cleaver 2002) and post-conflict contexts globally (Hollander 2014; Myrntinen et al. 2016), these aspirations of manhood were extremely difficult to attain in conflict-ridden Northern Uganda, conditioned by a variety of internal and external factors, including most prominently the more than two decades of armed conflict (Dolan 2009; Esuruku 2012). Dolan (2002) argues that,

in the Northern Ugandan context of [...] war, heavy militarization and internal displacement, it [was] very difficult if not impossible for the vast majority of men to fulfill the expectations of husband and father, provider and protector which are contained in the model of hegemonic masculinity (64).

During the course of the conflict, it became nearly impossible for most men to live up to the ideals of manhood (Onyango 2012). The majority of men faced extensive difficulties and were confronted with an inability in "achieving some of the key elements [of] the normative model masculinity into which they have been socialized" (Dolan 2002: 67).

Amongst a variety of conflict-related factors (see Dolan 2009; Onyango 2012), in particular the forced displacement of up to 95 percent of the Acholi population into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps at the height of the conflict (Branch 2011; Whyte et al. 2012) "contributed to a loss of social control" (Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014: 289). Constituting a form of enforced infantilization, the conditions of the camps installed significant barriers for men to live up to socially constructed expectations surrounding masculinities, and effectively incapacitated men in their masculine roles and responsibilities. Severely limited income-generating and agricultural opportunities largely rendered men unable to provide (Esuruku 2011). Instead, women often became the primary breadwinners of their families, both

through greater access to food aid and camp regulations that often allowed women to maintain small gardens surrounding the camps (*Interview 17 March 2016*).<sup>179</sup> Men's social responsibilities to protect were also largely (yet unsuccessfully) taken over by the state (Dolan 2002). In Northern Uganda's IDP camps, temporarily "men became women and women became men" (see Hollander 2014: 420; Lwambo 2013).<sup>180</sup> Despite this overall inability of the majority of men to live up to the hegemonic notions of Acholi masculinity, however, the most important and prevalent expectations regarding this model - i.e. men's abilities to protect and provide and to remain strong and invulnerable - remain mostly intact and travelled into the contemporary context (Dolan 2011).

## **6.5. Conceptualizing 'Displacement from Gendered Personhood'**

As outlined in this chapter's introduction, sexual violence against men is frequently theorized to rob male victims of their masculine identities by way of 'emasculatation' and 'feminization' (see Grey and Shepherd 2012; Russell 2007; Solangon and Patel 2012; Sivakumaran 2007). Nonetheless, exactly how such perceived processes unfold has not yet been fully explored, nor has existing scholarship critically engaged with these conceptual categories and associated terminologies. By way of developing the conceptual framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016), in this section I aim to address these persistent gaps in the literature and to critically engage with these concepts.

### ***Shortcomings of the 'Emasculatation' and 'Feminization' Conceptualization***

I argue that the concepts and terminologies around 'emasculatation' and 'feminization', as almost exclusively adopted by previous research on conflict-related sexual violence against men, are inherently problematic, particularly from a human rights standpoint and a gender equality prism. Utilizing feminist critique (see Sjoberg 2016;

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<sup>179</sup> At least in some camps, some women (in certain age segments) were allowed to leave the camp during pre-installed curfew hours and tend to the fields and gardens and were thus able to provide at least some food (see Esuruku 2012; Sahl and El-Bushra 2005). According to various respondents, only women were allowed to leave the camp because they were deemed to be at lesser risk of abduction by the rebels (*FGD, 6 May 2016*). Evidence shows, however, that young girls were also abducted at large numbers and exposed to sexual violations (Okello and Hovil 2007; Okot, Amony and Otim 2005).

<sup>180</sup> See previous discussion of constructions of femininities, which foregrounded that these changing gender roles and responsibilities were most often reverted again in the contemporary context.



Enloe 2004), I identify various conceptual and empirical shortcomings and indeed dangers with this terminology. I postulate that to speak of the gendered effects of sexual violence on male survivors as 'emasculating' and 'feminizing' is precarious for a variety of reasons. To begin with, such terminology and theorization necessitates unequal and patriarchal gender orders and relations in which women are subordinate to even less powerful men, who somewhat ironically nevertheless still benefit from socially constructed male privilege (Ní Aoláin 2016; Tickner 2001).

At the same time, 'emasculatation' and 'feminization' not only require but problematically further sustain and manifest these gendered hierarchies and vast inequalities (Pankhurst 2008), thereby further contributing to gendered subordination of women (Sjoberg and Via 201) and 'feminized (and therefore subordinated) traits, behaviors and characteristics (Sjoberg 2016). If feminization is essentially defined as devalorization and devaluation (Enloe 2004: 6; Sjoberg 2016: 142), then adapting and employing this terminology without critically examining it implies the inherent risk of becoming complicit in further entrenching these patriarchal expectations.<sup>181</sup> Focusing on the concept of groups in relation to ethnicity, Brubaker (2004) argued that "we should not uncritically adopt categories of [established] practice as our categories of social analysis" (166); his argument similarly speaks to the concepts and terms of 'emasculatation' and 'feminization' in relation to gender and violence. My motivation to depart and restrain from employing such terminology is therefore in part a normatively-driven endeavor.

Additional criticism further postulates that particularly the terminology of 'feminization' also suggests that victimhood and victimization must be seen as inherent and constitutive of femininities and that when (sexual) violence is perpetrated against women, it is merely ordinary or normal.<sup>182</sup> Likewise, critics voice concern that 'emasculatation' per definition is exclusive of women's experiences, and that in turn, violence against women is not seen as 'e-feminizing' or as having similar effects on female gender identities (see Pankhurst 2008).

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<sup>181</sup> At the same time, 'to emasculate' is defined as 'to make (someone or something) weaker or less effective' (see Merriam Webster Dictionary, n.d.).

<sup>182</sup> I have frequently been confronted with these valuable critiques when presenting my ongoing research about the impact of sexual violence on male gender identities at different conferences and workshops, and I am greatly thankful for these remarks.

### ***Conceptualizing 'Displacement from Gendered Personhood'***

Mindful of these conceptual shortcomings and critiques, and in an attempt to advance theorizing, I adopt the frame of 'displacement from gendered personhood' developed by Edström, Dolan et al.'s (2016) recent examination of the lived realities of refugee male survivors of sexual violence from the DRC living in Uganda's capital Kampala to conceptualize the gendered effects of sexual violence. The authors refer to the effects of male-directed sexual violence as "displacement from 'self and personhood'" (*ibid.*: 25), but don't further unpack this terminology and conceptualization. Deriving from this, I further emphasize the *gendered* dimension of both the personhood and displacement components, while further deconstructing and developing this conceptual framework.

I argue that conceptualizing the gendered effects of sexual violence (against women and men) as 'displacement from gendered personhood' is gender inclusive and can accommodate for the gendered experiences of conflict and sexual violence of both male and female survivors. While the effects of sexual violence on male survivors may certainly be expected to differ from the gendered impact on women, female survivors of sexual abuse within the context of armed conflict likewise frequently feel impacted in and displaced from their gendered identities. In Northern Uganda, for instance, sexual abuse affects women's likelihood to (re-)marry, and since marriage constitutes a defining element of femininities, women are impacted in their feminine identities (see Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014). This frame likewise demonstrates the organic link between gender and personhood in many societal contexts, as elaborated further above with reference to Acholiland. Similarly, the concept accommodates a myriad of layered and intertwined gendered harms that reflect survivors' long-term lived realities and experiences, thereby evidencing that the thwarting of gender identities frequently is a process, rather than an event (see Myrntinen et al. 2016: 10), to be fore-grounded by the analysis in the following section.

Importantly, the 'displacement' terminology suggests that similar to physical displacement, for instance into an IDP or refugee camp, displacement from gendered personhood can potentially be reversed, of course not without leaving its physical and psychological marks (see Whyte et al. 2012). There often is a misfit between the

dominant concept of 'emasculatation', which is static and unambiguous, and survivors' lived realities, which often are dynamic, fluid, ambiguous and variable (see Gilson 2016). Employing the language of 'displacement' illustrates that these experiences are not necessarily static but potentially temporal and reversible, preventing us from employing terminology with a tendency to freeze dynamic experiences into time and space.

During the workshops that I conducted with male survivors, some respondents attested that they previously felt less of a man, but that these perceptions have changed over time, shaped and influenced by different factors. For instance, one survivor described that "before we came together [in a survivors' group] we had a lot of feelings of being less of a man but since being in a group, the feelings of being less of a man have reduced" (*Workshop 3*). Chapter 7 highlights precisely how support groups helped male survivors in re-negotiating their gendered identities and how this constitutes an integral component of a process of justice. Within the context of this discussion, such survivors' sentiments serve to illustrate the potential temporal character and reversibility of these gendered processes and lived realities.

Deriving from these conceptual and analytical premises, I propose the application and further scholarly examination of the concept of 'displacement from gendered personhood' as a theoretical-analytical framework to examine the gendered effects of conflict more broadly and of sexual violence (against women and men) in particular on gender identities and personhood.

## **6.6. Analysis - Deconstructing Male Survivors' Harms**

Building upon these theoretical and contextual reflections, in this section I proceed with the analysis by deconstructing and unpacking Acholi male survivors' sexual and gendered harms. I argue that the impact of male-directed sexual violence is characterized as a process, rather than a singular event, as most commonly treated within the existing literature (see Alison 2007; Meger 2015). This process begins with perceived gendered subordination through acts of penetrative rape but is further manifested and cemented through a variety of gendered harms extending far into the post-violation period.

### **6.6.1. "They made me as if I was their woman" - Gender Subordination through Penetration**

Throughout the expanding literature on sexual violence against men, thwarted masculine identities are most frequently linked to perceived gendered subordination as the result of penetrative rape (Sivakumaran 2007; Sorensen 2011).<sup>183</sup> Within a heteronormative and heterosexual context such as Northern Uganda (Dolan 2009), penetrative male anal rape is considered as rendering the male survivor feminine and/or homosexual, therefore depriving him of his manhood and thereby subordinating him (Alison 2007; Dowd 2008). During a focus group discussion, various respondents described that "men were sodomized and therefore they are now women because they are powerless and have been slept with" (*FGD, 11 May 2016*).

#### ***Gender Subordination through Penetrative Acts***

A former service-provider explained that "the process of male victims losing their manhood has to do with them being subordinated through the penetration. Only women are supposed to be penetrated, so if a man is raped he becomes like a woman" (*Interview, 10 May 2016*). Within the Acholi cultural context and according to corresponding constructions of gender and sexuality (Dolan 2009; Porter 2013), men are expected to actively penetrate and women to be passively penetrated. If a man is raped, he involuntarily assumes a female sexual role or character and is therefore rendered feminine, and thus subordinate in the gender order (Esuruku 2011). To cite Sjoberg (2016),

gender subordination is fundamentally a power relationship in which those perceived as female/feminine are made less powerful than those perceived as masculine/male. This power relationship extends through the perceived possession of gendered traits and the gendering of perceived behaviors and actions (39).

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<sup>183</sup> Since the majority of respondents were primarily sexually violated in the form of penetrative rape, I focus on this form of violence and its effects. Castration and sexual torture likewise powerfully harm virtues of masculinity. Based on his experience of working with male survivors in Northern Uganda, one of my interviewees confirmed that "for some survivors, castration or sexual torture sometimes makes them to feel less of a man even more so [compared to rape], because they lose their spiritual and physical manhood" (*Interview, 4 May 2016*).

A key-informant explained that "through penetration, you subordinate the man. Male victims are helpless and give in to other men and are being subordinated through penetration" (*Interview, 26 February 2016*). "They made me as if I was their woman", one male survivor described his experienced (*Workshop 2*), characterized by this perceived gender subordination.

Crimes of sexual violence thus communicate a power and dominance relationship between the victimized, who in Sjoberg's (2016) terms are "perceived as female/feminine" and "less powerful", and the perpetrator, or "those perceived as masculine/male" (24). Rendering someone (or something) as female through acts of penetration, often referred to as 'feminization' throughout the literature, can conceptually be understood as placement along gendered hierarchies (*ibid.*: 36). According to Sjoberg, femininity "is associated with rejection, devalorization, immobility and limits" (*ibid.*), while Cynthia Enloe (2004) explains that marginalizing the female implies to infantilize, ignore, or trivialize, amongst others.<sup>184</sup> For Peterson (2010), the ultimate effect of rendering someone (or something) female is a reduction in legitimacy, status and value. Sjoberg (2016) further argues that "gender relations are not power relations that just happen between men and women" (26). Instead, "gender relations happen among parties in war and conflict" (*ibid.*), including between war-affected civilians and armed combatants. It is precisely because of these connotations and implied effects that the terminologies of emasculation/feminization are problematic from a gender equality prism, as argued before (see Chapter 6.5).

This (perceived) process of compromised masculine identities as a result of male-directed sexual violence similarly rests upon the theoretical premise of a socially constructed discrepancy between masculinities and vulnerabilities as well as between manhood and victimhood (see Connell 2005; Gilson 2016; Kimmel 2010). Across most patriarchal societies, the notion of victimhood arguably sits uneasily with "social expectations of what it is to be a man [...] - as strong, tough, self-sufficient and impenetrable" (Weiss 2008: 277). Within a heteronormative environment in particular, this disjuncture becomes further exacerbated if the victimization takes on a sexual(ized) dimension. Concurring with Fineman's (2008) theoretical work on

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<sup>184</sup> In contrast, to masculinize someone (or something) is associated with affirmation, potential, success and valorization (Sjoberg 2016: 36).

vulnerabilities (see Chapter 1.3),<sup>185</sup> Gilson (2016) describes dominant notions of vulnerability as "a fundamental, unavoidable dimension of the human condition" (78).<sup>186</sup> Based on a feminist premise, Gilson argues that vulnerability is a feminized concept, "associated both with femininity and with weakness and dependency" (*ibid.*: 71). Precisely because of these feminized characteristics, vulnerability is constructed as incompatible with manhood, and men are therefore socially conditioned not to be vulnerable if they wish to remain masculine.<sup>187</sup> Sexual victimhood in particular clearly signifies (sexual) vulnerability, which in turn is irreconcilable with manhood, and male sexual victimization thus implies perceived compromises of masculinities.

### ***From Bodies to Acts - The Gendered Performativity of Penetration***

While compromising the survivors' sense of manhood, sexual violence (perpetrated against women or men) is also often seen as enhancing the perpetrator's masculinity and equipping him (or her) with a sense of hyper-masculinity (Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2010; Sjöberg 2016). Further below (Chapter 6.6.2), I demonstrate how acts of male rape communicate male survivors' inabilities to protect themselves, which translates into a (perceived) subversion of their power and diminishes their masculinities, while simultaneously signifying the perpetrators' (perceived) power and dominance as associated with hyper-masculinity. Conceptually, however, it may seem contradictory and paradoxical that acts of same-sexual penetration between men are theorized to only cast "a taint of homosexuality" (Sivakumaran 2005) on the victim but not on the perpetrator (Oosterhoff et al. 2004). Why is the perpetrator who actively penetrates not also (or even more so) regarded as homosexual and thus as less of a man, but instead seen as even more of a man and hyper-masculine?

As poignantly argued by Edström, Dolan et al. (2016), it is not exclusively gendered bodies, but rather *acts* of penetration that most effectively communicate and transfer power and dominance and thus masculinity within the context of male-directed

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<sup>185</sup> As introduced in Chapter 1, Fineman (2008) theorizes that "vulnerability is universal and constant, inherent in the human condition" (8), and "arises from our embodiment [and] carries with it the ever-present possibility of harm, injury and misfortune" (*ibid.*). For Fineman, "understanding vulnerability begins with the realization that many such events are ultimately beyond human control" (*ibid.*) and that therefore, human beings can never eliminate the possibility of injury and harm, although they can attempt to mitigate the risk.

<sup>186</sup> Despite this apparent universality, however, individuals significantly vary in their (potential) vulnerability in different contexts and to diverse forms of violence and harms, intersectional depending upon *inter alia* gender, class and race.

<sup>187</sup> These socially constructed incompatibilities appear somehow ironic in light of Fineman's conception of vulnerability as universal and inherent in the human condition (2008: 1).

sexual violence. "It is the subjection to an act of penetration (i.e. being penetrated), rather than the body of the victim, that renders the victim feminine, a woman, and therefore subordinates" (*ibid.*: 36). Sjoberg (2016) writes, "both the enactment and the experience of sexual violence in war and conflict is an embodied practice, where people's bodies (as victims and as perpetrators) are both the sites of inscribed violence and the site of the inscription of messages of gendered subordination" (196).

Conceptually, a systematic examination of sexual violence against men, and penetrative rape in particular, thus contributes to a shift of the "basis of gender essentialism from bodies to acts" (Edström, Dolan et al 2016: 36). Understanding the sexual *act* of penetration as effectively communicating masculinity, power and dominance helps us to resolve the seeming paradoxical puzzle of why victims' masculine identities seem to be compromised, but perpetrators seem to gain masculinity within the context of male-on-male rape. This is because of the powerfully gendered performativity of penetration as linked to masculinity and gender (Butler 1990). Sjoberg (2016) similarly emphasizes the need "to focus on *what happens* when sexual violence is committed" in terms of gendering and that "*acts* of sexual violence [...] can be understood as gendered" (177).

Crucially, an analysis of penetrative acts as inherently linked to the thwarting, compromising and awarding of masculinities thus (re-)connects elements of sexuality and sex, as linked to gender, power and dominance (Foucault 1978), to discourses around sexual violence in general and against men in particular. Recent research by Eriksson Baaz and Stern (2013) has demonstrated and critically questioned that gendered scholarship on conflict and security increasingly seems to write out and neglect sexuality and sexual (see Dolan 2014), instead solely and exclusively focusing on gender (as separated from sex). Such is particularly the case for discussions around male-directed sexual violence, which solely center around gender as linked to dominance and control (Alison 2007). Existing scholarship on male-directed sexual violence fails to seriously consider how sexuality and sex are organically connected to power (and thus to gender) (see Foucault 1978). While gender must crucially be the cornerstone of any analysis of sexual violence (Davies and True 2015), an examination of penetration within the context of sexual violence and its gendered effects reminds us that sexuality and sex similarly need to be foregrounded in any such discussions. Sjoberg (2013) argues that "[...] sex, sexuality

and violence are more closely linked than traditional analyses [of sexual violence in war] might acknowledge" (196). Sjoberg (2016) thus concludes that conflict-related sexual violence, including against men, is sexed, sexual and gendered (also see Enloe 1989).

### ***Male-Directed Sexual Violence as Homo-Sexualization?***

The literature on sexual violence against men moreover suggests that such violence not only renders the victim female, but also potentially 'homo-sexualizes' male survivors. The acts of anal penetration by another man are theorized to render the male survivor homosexual (Sivakumaran 2005), which is seen in Acholi's heteronormative society as incompatible and irreconcilable with manhood (Alava 2016).

However, none of the survivors who participated in this study expressed that they perceived themselves as 'homo-sexualized' (see Sivakumaran 2005) following their sexual violations. As evidenced above, survivors regularly articulated that "they turned men into women" (*FGD 6 May 2016*) and that they "made us to suffer like women" (*Workshop 1*) as a result of the rapes, but never that they perceived to be turned into homosexuals. Therefore, in Northern Uganda's highly heteronormative society, where homosexuality is regarded as an abnormality (*Interview, 4 May 2016*) and outlawed (Alava 2016),<sup>188</sup> ascribed homo-sexualization (Sivakumaran 2005) as a result of male-directed sexual violence appears to be less prevalent among survivors' experiences. Arguably, this may well be due to the exacerbated and immense stigmatization attached to homosexuality in Northern Uganda (see Alava 2016), which may be intensified by the government's criminalization of same-sex acts. In this social context, being considered by others and perceived by oneself as homosexual may be even more harmful and damaging than being symbolically turned into a woman. At the same time, however, society at large, and in fact various individual service providers and health professionals, nevertheless frequently confused male rape with homosexuality (*Field notes, 17 February 2016; Interview 23 June 2016*).

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<sup>188</sup> Even though the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2014 was annulled, homosexuality is still criminalized and punishable by life in prison.



### **6.6.2. "I used to be a strong man, but now I am not" - Gender Subordination through Disempowerment**

Most of the literature's theorizing of the gendered effects of sexual violence against men centers on the subordination of male survivors through acts of penetration, as examined above (Meger 2016a; Russell 2007; Sivakumaran 2007; Zarkov 2001). My fieldwork findings, however, evidence that the 'displacement from gendered personhood' frequently is a layered process, evolving around a myriad of intertwined gendered harms, rather than a one-time event. Essentially, the gendered effects of sexual violence are further compounded by the sexual violations' gendered harms. These different and intersecting harms signify male survivors' inabilities to protect, render them unable to provide for their families, and imply effects on their abilities to erect and procreate, which compromise survivors' gendered identities. The analysis throughout this section is structured in accordance with these most common gendered harms that holistically contribute towards survivors' (perceived) displacement from gendered personhood.

#### ***Male Survivors' Inabilities to Protect***

My findings reveal that sexual violence against men communicates male survivors' inabilities to protect themselves (and often their families), as they are expected to according to the model of normative hegemonic masculinity described above (see Dolan 2009). One male survivor explained, "admitting the violation would admit that I have not been able to protect myself, which means I am no longer a man" (*Workshop 3*). A key-informant confirmed that according to survivors, "if they admit to the violation they admit to being less of a man because they failed to protect themselves" (*Interview 15, April 2016*). This perceived inability to protect themselves furthermore embodies what many of my respondents, describing their own experiences, frequently referred to as 'helplessness' and 'powerlessness' or as 'being forced to give in' (*Workshops 1, 3*). In relation to this, a male community member described that,

what makes you less of a man, in Acholi it is cultural norms, it is about power. If I take your woman and you cannot protect, you are not a man. Men are expected to provide and to protect. So if you do not have the power to protect, either your wife or yourself, you are not a real man (*FGD, 11 May 2016*).

As this statement evidences, it is commonly assumed that if a man is not capable of protecting himself, he will likewise not be able to protect his family, thus significantly failing him in one of his cardinal masculine roles as protector of the homestead. "If he can be raped, who is protecting me?" a social worker from Uganda is quoted with regards to such assumptions (see Storr 2011). As a result of this perceived inability to protect themselves and the assumed incapability to protect their families, various male survivors have been left by their wives (see below; *Workshops 1-3*). Since being a married head of the household constitutes a defining characteristic of Acholi hegemonic masculinity (Dolan 2009), male survivors who were left by their wives feel that their masculine identities are additionally negatively impacted (see further below).

A spatial analysis of where the sexual violations took place offers further insights. As contextualized above, sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda occurred both in the public as well as in the private sphere (see Chapter 5.3.2). When perpetrated in public, deliberately visible to other family or community members, the sexual violations were highly symbolic, communicative and performative (Butler 1990), as they publicly demonstrate the men's gendered subordination and their inability to protect themselves. On the other hand, when sexual violations occurred within the men's own homesteads and therefore in the private-sphere, the male survivors are considered unable to provide for the protection of the homestead, considered as the epicenter of Acholi cosmology (p'Bitek 1986).<sup>189</sup> Male survivors are thus seen as failing in one of their primary masculine responsibilities of protecting the home (Onyango 2012), and sexual violations within the men's own homesteads signal clear intra-male communication and an establishment of masculine hierarchies between the male perpetrator and the male victim. This demonstration of the (perceived) inability of male sexual violence survivors to protect themselves, their families and their homesteads through acts of penetrative rape thus signifies their (perceived) inability to live up to the model of hegemonic masculinity, and thus (at least temporarily) displaces them from their gendered personhood.

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<sup>189</sup> Comparably, although underpinned by different conflict-related dynamics, fathers whose children were forcibly abducted by the rebels (see Chapter 5.4) can similarly be seen as having failed in their masculine duty to protect. These failures, however, are not further compounded by the initial sexual and gendered violation of sexual violence or by additional inability to provide and procreate.

### ***Male Survivors' Inabilities to Provide***

At the same time, the physical consequences of sexual violence (see Chapter 5.3.4) frequently affect men's capacities to work and thus their abilities to provide, as is expected of them as male breadwinners and heads of households (El-Bushra and Sahl 2005). Many respondents reported that the health complications caused by the violations, including significant waist and back pain and rectal injuries,<sup>190</sup> prevented them from carrying out any manual labor or agricultural work (*Workshops 1-4*).<sup>191</sup> "I used to be a strong man, but now I am weak", a male sexual violence survivor explained (JRP 2013: 22). Most respondents similarly attested that as a result of their violations and the related health complications, they are too weak to conduct any work. One survivor explained: "I have many scars and injuries that I got as a result of the rape and this has weakened me and it cannot enable me to do any hard labor. I am not performing as a man" (*Workshop 3*). Another survivor attested that the sexual violation "has also affected my ability to work and my productivity" (*Workshop 2*). As a result of these physical injuries caused by the sexual violations, the majority of survivors who participated in the study therefore attested to be "unable to perform any farm work as men are expected to do" (*Workshop 2*). Many respondents attested that they felt less of a man because of this. "I started feeling useless and not man enough", a male survivor described his experiences and consequent self-perception (*Workshop 1*), while another survivor described that the "was not having the ability to work like a man" (*Workshop 2*). Yet another survivor narrated,

I am not a real man anymore because ever since the violence I cannot do any work anymore and I cannot dig in the gardens so I cannot provide for my wife and for my children and my family. I cannot raise enough money to pay my children into school. So that is why I am now no longer a man (*Workshop 1*).

These additional layered harms disempowered male survivors by challenging them in their masculine roles and responsibilities as providers, thereby displacing them from their socially constructed masculine personhood. As Onyango (2012) illustrates, "for the Acholi, men feel they are 'not men' when they cannot provide for their families" (2017). In addition to the physical implications of the violations, the psychological

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<sup>190</sup> For a more comprehensive overview of the physical and psychological consequences of sexual violence as experienced by male survivors in Northern Uganda, see Chapter 5.3.4.

<sup>191</sup> All survivors who participated in this study live in rural settings, where the most common form of work available is agricultural work or other physical labor, such as for instance brick-making.

effects also prevent male survivors from working and thus from providing for their families. As a result of diverse psychological consequences (Sivakumaran 2010), most male survivors have disengaged from many community activities, including agricultural work.

This inability to work and thus to provide for their families and wider communities consequentially disallows male survivors to live up to their masculine responsibilities as contained in the hegemonic model of Acholi masculinity, thereby displacing them from their gendered identity. This displacement, however, can potentially be temporal, as male survivors can (and at times have) regain their physical strengths and thus their ability to work. Some male sexual violence survivors (following medical treatment) in the current post-conflict situation are in a better situation to work and thus better able to adhere to masculine expectations than they were in the aftermath of their violations, which immediately links to their post-conflict justice conceptions (see Chapters 7.4; 8.4).

### ***Male Survivors' Inabilities to Procreate***

Another fundamental aspect related to sexual violence and the impact on male survivors' gendered identities includes the physiologically-conditioned inabilities or difficulties to achieve or sustain an erection. Edström, Dolan et al. (2016) note that the "almost universal numbing of their capacity for sexual arousal" (26) constitutes one of the most common and most prevalent physiological consequences of male-directed rape in Uganda.

As uncovered in Chapter 5.3.4, numerous informants reported difficulties in achieving an erection, a lack of interest in or desire for sexual interactions, and that they felt impacted in their masculinities as a result of this (*Workshops 1, 3*). For instance, survivors attested that "they cannot have sex with [their] wife anymore as a result of the violation" (*Workshop 3*). Another survivor similarly explained that he "does not have the appetite and strength to have sex" (*Workshop 1*) while for another survivor, "I also feel that I cannot erect now, because of what happened to me" (*Workshop 3*). According to another male survivor, "without the ability to have sex I feel like a castrated bull. Due to that pain that I experience I have no urge for sex" (*Workshop 3*). One key-informant contextualized these common experiences by elaborating that "the inability of manhood in relation to [sexual violence against

men] is psychological and physiological. He cannot perform his sexuality and functioning of sex anymore and is thus no longer a man, according to him and his wife" (*Interview, 10 May 2016*). As further argued by Edström, Dolan et al. (2016: 26),

one of the concerns around this is, of course, centred on the absence of sexual pleasure and joy in a person's private life [...]. But it is also linked to fundamental issues around masculinity and identity, not to mention serious concerns over reproductive health and choice [...].

The informant quoted above referred to another male survivor for whom "sex was useless because it reminded him of his own rape all the time. His erection goes and his feelings of being a man are completely lost" (*Interview, 10 May 2016*). Being sexually active and the ability to father children (and preferably boys as first-borns) constitute central markers of manhood within the Acholi context (Onyango 2012), and being unable to fulfill this translates into an implied inability of being a 'real man' and thus a displacement from gendered personhood.

### ***Male Survivors' Relationships to their Partners, Families and Communities***

A combination of these layered gendered and sexual harms likewise heavily impacts male survivors' relationships to their partners, families and communities. The data underpinning this study suggest that these impaired and aggravated relationships constitute significant harms, often resulting in communal isolation, social exclusion, and stigmatization.<sup>192</sup>

As a result of survivors' inabilities to have sex, procreate and reproduce, further compounded by the inabilities to protect and to provide as discussed above, numerous survivors have been left by their wives. "I cannot stay in the house with a fellow woman" is a statement that several respondents were confronted with by their wives (*Workshop 2*). Keeping in mind that having a family and being married constitute foundational cornerstones of the Acholi model of normative hegemonic masculinity (Dolan 2009), such experiences, in addition to causing much emotional and mental distress, further undermine male survivors' masculinities within this local

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<sup>192</sup> The discussion in Chapter 7.4 shows how survivors' groups advance the process of responding to these harms of isolation and exclusion.

context. As narrated by a male survivor: "I am less of a man because now nobody is with me. My wife left and I am not a real man anymore" (*Workshop 3*).

Furthermore, in Acholiland, men and especially elders are culturally and socially expected to attend and actively participate in community meetings and consultations (Dolan 2009). Respondents explained that taking on a leadership role in the community is one of the integral responsibilities and requirements of being a man in Northern Uganda (*FGD, 6 May 2016*). Out of fear of being stigmatized, however, many survivors purposefully decide not to engage in any such meetings. "It is better to stay alone and not to attend these meetings, because they might stigmatize or name-call you", one respondent explained (*Workshop 2*). By not participating in these meetings, male survivors are seen as neglecting and ignoring their masculine duties and responsibilities within their wider communities, which in turn negatively impacts their gender identities.

### ***The Specificity of Sexual Violence***

Clearly, the inability to provide and to protect as undermining manhood within the context of a protracted conflict is neither unique nor exclusive to male survivors of sexual violence. The example of men's forced infantilization in the context of displacement above shows that these experiences are representative for large parts of the male Acholi population. Similarly, throughout the conflict, countless civilians suffered horrendous atrocities, leaving them with a variety of untreated wounds and physical and psychological health complications impacting their abilities to work and provide and thus on their masculine identities (see Okot 2017). For instance, a man who was beaten by the rebels and has resulting medical complications, or who was shot by government soldiers and remains with bullet fragments in his body is equally, if not even more so, unable to conduct physical labor and thus to provide.

However, I argue that when initially conditioned and caused by sexual violations, which affected male survivors' masculinities in the first place, these layered harms become further gendered, compounded, and intensified. The experience of displacement from gendered personhood must thus be conceptualized as an intertwined process, originating from the sexualized, sexed and gendered nature of initial sexual violations in the first place (see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2013; Sjöberg 2016)

and further exacerbated through layered gendered harms experienced in the aftermath of the violations (Myrttinen et al. 2016).

Nevertheless, this displacement from gendered personhood can potentially be temporal. For instance, and as detailed above, male sexual violence survivors over time can and often do regain their physical strength and thus their ability, at least in part, to conduct physical work and thus to provide for their families. This experience of the inability to live up to masculine expectations and the perceived displacement from their gendered self can thus potentially be reversed, warranting the conceptualization and terminology of 'displacement', rather than (ultimate) 'loss'.

## **6.7. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I empirically and conceptually unpacked male survivors' gendered harms. While previous research almost unanimously argues that wartime sexual violence against men 'emasculates' male survivors (Lewis 2014; Myrttinen et al. 2016), how such processes unfold and what they entail remains only poorly understood and under-theorized. The systematic analysis of the impact of wartime rape on Acholi male survivors in this chapter thus complements existing studies and fills a gap in the growing literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men.

The analysis in this chapter thereby carries important empirical and theoretical contributions for scholarship on wartime sexual violence. Empirically, the analysis offers important insights into the phenomenological lived realities of male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda. My findings foreground that the impact of wartime rape on male survivors' masculinities is not a static one-time event, as commonly postulated by existing studies, but rather a dynamic process that unfolds over time and that involves layered gendered harms. Theoretically, I propose the framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016) to conceptualize the impact of sexual violence on male survivors' gendered identities, thereby advancing theorizing on conflict-related sexual violence.

By way of summarizing, sexual violence impacts on male survivors' masculine identities in a myriad of layered and intertwined ways. The process of 'displacement from gendered personhood' for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda initiates through acts of penetrative rape, which within a patriarchal and

hetero-sexual context "turned men into women" (*FGD, 6 May 2016*) and therefore subordinate male survivors (Sjoberg 2016). This perceived gendered subordination is further compounded by the violations' layered gendered harms, which render male survivors unable to protect (themselves and their families), to provide and at times to perform sexually and procreate, thereby significantly challenging their masculine roles and responsibilities and hence impacting their gender identities. The compromising and reifying of male survivors' masculine identities is thus an evolving and unfolding process, rather than an event.

This necessary deconstructed understanding of male survivors' experiences crucially enables us to theorize and respond to these gendered harms. This sustained examination of the gendered impact of sexual violence against men therefore sets the foundations for analyzing justice in response to these sexual and gendered harms. Against this background, the following two chapters critically and carefully take into account male survivors' phenomenological experiences and their gendered harms when analyzing justice in response to these crimes.



## Chapter 7: 'Men of Courage' - Survivors' Groups as a Pathway to Justice

### 7.1. Introduction

Thus far, previous chapters have foregrounded that in Northern Uganda, sexual violence compromises male survivors' masculine identities (Chapter 6), and that transitional justice processes have largely marginalized these gendered experiences. Understanding the injustices and harms experienced by the male survivors who participated in this study is conceptually important for analyzing their understandings of justice, as any discussion of redress must firmly be rooted in, and respond to, prior experiences of injustice (see Douzinas 2000; Sen 2017). Deriving from these premises, this chapter constitutes the first step in answering the dissertation's primary research question of how male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice. As established in the Introduction, justice in response to male-directed sexual violence is only insufficiently explored, and especially male survivors' perspectives on justice remain remarkably absent from existing studies. The examination in this chapter therefore addresses a prevailing empirical conundrum in the literature.

In this chapter, I specifically interrogate how support groups relate to justice within the absence of formalized, official measures in response to male sexual harms. The majority of survivors who participated in this study<sup>193</sup> stated that for them, "justice means to be in a group with other survivors" (*Field notes*, 27 May 2015) and that "justice can be seen in a group like this" (*Workshop 3*). Unpacking and analyzing these statements, I demonstrate that groups make it possible for male survivors to experience a sense of justice in four fundamental ways: (1) by enabling survivors to re-negotiate their gender identities; (2) by mitigating isolation through the (re-)building of relationships; (3) by offering safe spaces for story-telling as a culturally-resonating contribution to justice, enabling survivors to exercise agency; and (4) by

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<sup>193</sup> As explained in the methodology chapter, all male survivors who engaged in the workshop discussions were members of male sexual violence survivors' groups. The findings are therefore specific to men who are members in these groups, and are not necessarily generalizable to other male survivors. Nevertheless, the findings presented here shed important light on how the survivors participating in this study conceptualize justice.

initiating a process of recognizing male survivors' experiences, thereby contributing to recognition as 'another kind of justice' (see Haldemann 2009).

Drawing from this, I argue that by addressing male sexual and gendered harms in a myriad of ways, survivors' groups constitute a pathway, or a conduit, through which justice can be achieved amongst survivors themselves and on a micro-level. In Northern Uganda, where formalized and standardized transitional justice processes are irresponsive to male sexual violations (see Chapter 7.2; Schulz 2015), survivors' groups thus constitute "alternatives to traditional institutional responses" for "harms that have too often gone unrecognized, unnamed and unaddressed" (Minow 1998: 4). In analyzing survivors' groups as a pathway to justice, I thus follow Baines' (2010) approach to justice as "a social project [...]", which "include[s] the various strategies employed by the war-affected population to deal with the legacies of mass violence" (7).

While previous research examined how victims' associations enable their members to engage with external processes of dealing with the past (see Humphrey and Valverde 2007; Rombouts 2004; Kesselring 2016), the potential for survivors to experience justice through their participation in groups themselves has been only insufficiently explored, especially through a masculinities lens. My examination in this chapter therefore carries important empirical and conceptual contributions for transitional justice scholarship, by interrogating the peripheries of justice processes (Sharp 2013; see Chapter 7.5), and by evidencing that justice for male sexual violence survivors "often takes place at the micro level, amongst the war-affected themselves and firmly outside the formal institutions" (Baines 2010: 3).

Although groups can thus facilitate justice on a micro-level, which primarily focuses on survivors' needs and is concerned with relationships between individuals (Kanyangara et al. 2014), however, additional justice-related needs on the macro-level prevail. As articulated by one survivor, "groups are one way for us to get justice, but in the future other measures are also needed" (*Workshop 3*). In this reading, survivors' groups constitute one piece within a larger puzzle of justice (see Chapter 8).

To contextualize my analysis, section 2 situates groups within a vacuum of harm-responsive justice for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda, and offers

a general examination of survivors' groups in transitional justice scholarship. Section 3 provides empirical background information about male survivors' groups in Acholiland. In section 4, I systematically unpack how groups create pathways to justice, based upon survivors' empirically grounded viewpoints, which forms the centerpiece of the analysis. Prior to concluding, section 5 draws out empirical and conceptual implications from my arguments for transitional justice theorizing.

## **7.2. Theoretical Reflections on Justice and Survivors' Groups**

Throughout this section, I attest a vacuum of justice for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda, and situate my analysis in existing research on survivors' groups in the context of transitional justice. I argue that the groups' contribution to justice becomes necessary and possible because formalized justice measures are currently not responsive to male sexual harms. I also argue that although existing scholarship increasingly focuses on the different roles and functions of survivors' groups within transitional justice discourses (see Rombouts 2004; Kent 2011), previous research has not yet sufficiently explored how survivors' participation in the groups can facilitate (a sense of) justice amongst themselves, a research gap that this chapter seeks to address.

### **7.2.1. Survivors' Groups within a Vacuum of Transitional Justice**

Here, I situate survivors' groups within a vacuum of official transitional justice for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda (see Chapter 8), thereby setting the point of departure for the analysis undertaken in this chapter.<sup>194</sup> Despite "a pressing imperative for accountability [...] that takes specific account of gender-based violence", only "scant attention has been paid to the sexual integrity and dignity harms experienced by [...] men" (Ní Aoláin 2015: 2). This absence of gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice with utility across diverse settings is particularly evident in Northern Uganda, where previous and ongoing transitional justice developments fail to account for crimes of sexual violence against men (Chapter 8), and arguably for gender-based violence more broadly (Ladisch 2015; Okello and Hovil 2007).

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<sup>194</sup> This gap is unpacked and expanded upon in the following Chapter. Here, I only briefly introduce and exemplify the absence of justice for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda, to contextualize the present analysis in this chapter.

Although the current proceedings of the ICC against Dominic Ongwen and of the national ICD against Thomas Kwoyelo include charges of sexual and gender-based violence against women (see MacDonald and Porter 2016), these recent developments do not include crimes of sexual violence against men (see Chapter 8). On a national level, the Ugandan Penal Code (UPC), which forms the country's primary legal framework, defines rape in gender-exclusive terms, solely recognizing women and girls as victims of sexual and gender-based violence and thereby excluding male survivors (see Chapter 8.3). At the same time, the ICD is unlikely to be a viable avenue for male sexual violence survivors to seek justice. The ICD operates within the government's jurisdiction, and therefore "any prosecution of government-linked war crimes under the current government is highly unlikely" (MacDonald and Porter 2016: 703), let alone any accountability for crimes of male-directed sexual violence. These practical gaps thus mirror the shortcomings of gender-essentializing conceptions of rape under Ugandan law (see Chapter 8.3).

The Ugandan government's draft national transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014)<sup>195</sup> further reflects these gendered blind-spots. For instance, the policy includes only two vague references to gender,<sup>196</sup> and only one reference to sexual violence,<sup>197</sup> thus fundamentally lacking any consideration for gendered experiences and harms, let alone any consideration for male survivors specifically.<sup>198</sup> Conditioned by these intersecting gaps, the formal and official transitional justice landscape in Uganda is strikingly insensitive to male survivors' sexual harms (see Chapter 8; RLP 2013; Schulz 2015). This non-availability and irresponsiveness of formal processes to male sexual violence survivors and their gendered harms is further compounded by a profound Acholi lived reality of a deep-seated frustration with and mistrust of the Ugandan government to deliver justice (Porter 2012; Okello, Dolan et al. 2012). Echoing survivors' sentiments from across various post-conflict sites (Guthrey 2015; Kent 2012; Robins 2011), the majority of respondents expressed frustration,

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<sup>195</sup> As elaborated before (see Chapter 5.5), the policy is yet to be passed by the Parliament and yet to be legislated and implemented (see Okiror 2016). See McDonald (2014) for a detailed analysis and critique of the policy, and the process by which it came into existence.

<sup>196</sup> These vague references are with regard to gender equality and the policy's objective of mainstreaming gender concerns in transitional justice.

<sup>197</sup> The reference to sexual violence is in the policy's background section, outlining relevant international legal frameworks, but not discussing concrete justice measures in direct response to sexual violence

<sup>198</sup> Considering that UN Women contributed to earlier drafts of the policy, this marginalization and exclusion of gender in the current sixth version of the draft seems particularly surprising.

dissatisfaction and a lack of trust regarding state-administered or top-down elite-driven transitional justice mechanisms (see Chapter 8). In the following chapter, I further demonstrate this vacuum of gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice, by systematically evidencing the irresponsiveness of different justice measures to male sexual harms, thus deepening the analysis.

In this context, traditional, customary and localized justice means take on a prominent role in Northern Uganda, either as complements or alternatives to formalized and institutionalized mechanisms (Baines 2005; Quinn 2007). As argued elsewhere in this dissertation (Chapter 4.3.3.), however, these informal mechanisms are equally ill-equipped to remedy gendered harms, including sexual violence against men. In particular the masculine and hetero-normative dimensions of these measures are likely to ignore gendered conflict-related experiences (Lonergan 2012; Baines 2007), and leave very little room to engage with masculinities outside the normative hegemonic masculinity framework, let alone male sexual and gendered harms. The majority of Acholi traditional rituals also serve a different purpose, and primarily deal with killings and spiritual cleansing (Baines 2005; Quinn 2007), making them inapplicable to cases of male rape. Furthermore, most rituals take place (semi-)publicly on the local level, which implies that male survivors' experiences would be publicly revealed to their communities and families (Anyeko et al. 2012). From a survivors' perspective, however, this is often highly undesirable. Coupled with various other technical limitations, such as the seeming impossibility of perpetrator participation, these intersecting factors render traditional justice process as inappropriate in dealing with cases of male rape.

Situated within this vacuum and these gendered blind-spots of the transitional justice landscape in Northern Uganda, survivors therefore inevitably need to turn to less standardized and formalized avenues of justice, provided these exist or can feasibly emerge (Das 2007; Das and Kleinman 2001). Previous scholarship has shown that alternative and community-based approaches redress options can come into sight in a context where the formal justice system is inaccessible or not available (see Perera 2001; Martin 2016). Within this context, I argue that survivors' groups can constitute viable and accessible options for survivors to achieve justice. Given the irresponsiveness of different transitional justice proceedings to male-directed sexual violence, groups offer substitute pathways for survivors to address their harms and

needs, and can thereby promote social reconstruction and deliver justice at the micro-level (see Chapter 7.4). Clark (2016) outlines that a macro-approach to justice, which concentrates primarily on institutionalized processes and judicial proceedings, too easily neglects the micro-dimensions of justice. Despite emerging scholarship on bottom-up and participatory forms of justice (Arriaza and Roht-Arriaza 2008; Lundy and McGovern 2008), it is still only poorly understood how these processes can look like in practical terms. For male sexual violence survivors in particular, the micro-dimensions of justice remain overwhelmingly ignored, underscoring the originality of my analysis in this chapter.

### **7.2.2. Survivors' Groups in Transitional Justice Scholarship**

Following this attestation of a vacuum of justice for male survivors in Northern Uganda, I proceed by reviewing to what extent and how survivors' groups have previously featured in the transitional justice literature. I argue that despite emerging scholarly engagement (Strassner 2013; Kesselring 2016), previous studies have thus far only insufficiently explored how within transitional and post-conflict settings, groups themselves can create pathways to justice. Furthermore, and apart from one remarkable exemption (Edström, Dolan et al. 2016), research on male sexual violence survivors' groups remains strikingly absent. With the examination in this chapter, I seek to address both of these gaps.

Although the field of transitional justice increasingly experienced a shift to the local (see Chapter 4.3.3; Shaw and Waldorf 2010), along with growing awareness that victims must be more actively involved in transitional justice proceedings (see Robins 2011; UN 2004), survivors nevertheless continue to occupy a subsidiary role in such processes (McEvoy and McGregor 2008; Robins 2009). Situated within this prevailing marginalization of survivors, their voices and concerns, "not much research has been conducted on organized victim-survivors of human rights violations" (de Waardt 2016: 434) and specifically on survivors' groups. Various noteworthy exceptions exist (Humphrey and Valverde 2007; Kent 2011; Rombouts 2004; Strassner 2013), however, and throughout existing transitional justice scholarship, victims' groups feature in different capacities, as explored in the

paragraphs below.<sup>199</sup> The *Khulumani* Victim Support Group in South Africa (see Kesselring 2016; Hamber 2009; Hamber et al. 2000) and the *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina (see Bouvard 2002; Humphrey and Valverde 2007) arguably received the lion-share of scholarly attention.

In methodological and epistemological terms, across localities, members of victims' associations have been recruited as informants for different studies on survivors' perspectives on justice and their experiences of engaging with processes designed to deal with the past (see Ahmed et al. 2016; de Waardt 2016; Stewart 2015). For instance, Hamber et al.'s (2000) examination of survivors' viewpoints on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is based upon participatory research with members of the *Khulumani* Victim Support Group. In methodological and ethical terms, survivors' organizations can serve as gatekeepers for accessing survivors in a more ethically sensitive approach while allowing for more sustainable engagement and research with victims and minimizing 'research fatigue', comparable to the methodological rationale motivating this study's research design (see Chapter 2).

Previous studies analyzed how survivors in groups engage with wider transitional justice processes (Kesselring 2016; Rombouts 2004). For instance, Humphrey and Valverde (2007) show that victims' groups in Argentina aid survivors in demanding recognition from the state. Utilizing post-genocide Rwanda as a case study, Rombouts (2004) unveils the manifold roles of victims' organizations in advocating for reparations. Further, in post-conflict East Timor, "some of the women involved in the widows' groups have become public advocates on issues such as justice and reparations" (Kent 2011: 446). Together, these studies demonstrate that by uniting individual survivors under the umbrella of an associations, groups facilitate an environment that enables survivors to collectively participate in and engage with external and macro-level processes of dealing with the past (Strassner 2003).

Fewer studies have examined more closely how groups can offer active coping strategies and how peer-group-counseling may facilitate healing and contribute to recovery (see Richters, Rutayisire and Slegh 2013). Specifically applied to sexual

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<sup>199</sup> In addition, there is a sizable literature on victims' support groups, in particular for survivors of suicide or sexual violence, outside the context of post-conflict and transitional societies. See for instance: Cerel et al. 2009; Ullman et al. 2007.

violence against men, Edström, Dolan et al. (2016) argue that "when survivors begin to connect with other people 'like themselves' this opens up new possibilities of healing, of building new identities and of reassessing their roles in - and relationships to - the world" (37). In Nepal and East Timor, groups of families of the disappeared aid victims in reconstructing their identities that have been impacted by the conflict in general and the disappearances in particular (Robins 2011). Furthermore, in South Africa, members of the *Khulumani* support group in a submission to the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) specifically recommended the maintenance and creation of survivors' support groups as means to "address the ongoing problems resulting from the TRC and conflicts of the past", because "groups will serve as a living memory [...] while on the other hand mobilizing more resources for the empowerment of the victims" (CSVVR and Khulumani 1998).

Despite these different positive aspects of survivors' groups, however, some challenges persist. For instance, victim-survivor associations in post-conflict Peru are heavily shaped by hierarchies between survivors (de Waardt 2016). Membership in survivors' groups is often characterized by stark power discrepancies between different members who exercise diverging levels of influence. Similarly, and conditioned by the fact that survivors' needs and groups' objectives develop over time (Strassner 2013), divisions among members and within groups emerge. To illustrate, in Argentina, the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in the mid-1980s split into two groups to pursue different interests and focus on separate issues (Bouvard 2002). In Northern Uganda, various survivor-led groups stopped operating due to internal disagreements over what the group ought to concentrate on (Akullo Otwilli and Schulz 2012). At the same time, there frequently are hierarchies of victimhood between survivors in groups vis-à-vis victims who are not part of an association, further entrenching differences between and within conflict-affected communities (Humphrey and Valverde 2008).

An additional challenge is that victims' groups are often established or supported by external actors, and an inherent danger of victim dependency upon outside bodies may often prevail within these relations.<sup>200</sup> Another difficulty is the potential loss of

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<sup>200</sup> A related challenge is not only victim dependency but also legitimacy: repressive states in transitional and post-conflict contexts often accuse human rights bodies or victims' associations that receive funding from external actors to be traitors or agents of foreign governments. In light of such



intersectional victims' experiences for many associations. Numerous groups unite specific sub-categories of victims, such as families of the disappeared (Robins 2011), former political prisoners (Shirlow and McEvoy 2008) or sexual violence survivors (Stewart 2015). Compared to larger associations that address a wider variety of conflict-related lived realities, these specific groups frequently lack intersectional victims' experiences, or may 'force' survivors to prioritize one victimhood-identity over another. Lastly, groups imply the risk of raising survivors' expectations with regards to justice, which they eventually cannot live up to and deliver, thereby disappointing survivors and potentially resulting in further perceived injustices. For Strassner (2013), and due to a variety of intersecting yet contextually-dependent factors, groups' "fundamental goals can never be realized" (331). Rather than contributing to or delivering justice, survivors' groups may thus potentially have a reverse, negative effect (*ibid.*).

On a global scale, many of these groups are heavily gendered in terms of their dynamics and compositions, as well as their interactions with outside actors. Across various contemporary post-conflict societies, many survivors' associations are gendered feminine, often predominantly uniting female victims (see Kent 2011; Martin 2016). In Northern Ireland, for instance, where most cases of deaths were men, women bereaved by the conflict constitute the majority of members in victims' associations, while the leadership of the groups is nevertheless often male (Ahmed et al. 2016).<sup>201</sup> At the same time, the majority of female victims have to engage with an overly masculine justice system (Smart 1989; West 1988) and with mostly male investigators (Ahmed et al. 2016; Schulz and O'Rourke 2015). My analysis of male sexual violence survivors' support groups thus facilitates a unique approach of specifically examining the gendered dimensions within male survivors' groups.

Despite these diverse scholarly engagements with survivors' associations throughout transitional justice literature, groups in relation to justice are primarily analyzed as precursors to wider and external processes of dealing with a past on the macro-level (Rombouts 2004; Kesselring 2016; Strassner 2013). However, existing studies thus

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dynamics, repressive states then often portray human rights bodies' requests as demands of external, mostly Western, powers, in an attempt to de-legitimize them.

<sup>201</sup> There is not sufficient evidence and data, however, to assess whether this gendered division between membership and leadership of survivors' groups is representative for other groups globally, evidencing how little remains to be known about the composition and dynamics of victims' groups in general.

far only insufficiently have explored survivors' groups as constituting a pathway to justice in themselves and on the micro-level, especially not through a masculinities lens within transitional and conflict settings, and with a focus on sexual violence against men. My analysis thus aids our understanding of how within a vacuum of official transitional justice, male sexual violence survivors can attain justice through their participation in support groups.

### **7.3. Empirical Contextualization - The 'Men of Courage'**

Deriving from these reflections, in this section I provide empirical background information about groups of Acholi male sexual violence survivors', situated within a broader overview of survivors' groups in Northern Uganda. I specifically introduce the *Men of Courage* survivors' groups, composed of three sub-groups located across Acholiland, which constitutes the subject of analysis in the following section.

#### **7.3.1. Survivors' Associations in Northern Uganda**

In Northern Uganda, a variety of victims' groups exist in different forms and with divergent mandates, objectives and foci, variations in size, activities and levels of organization. The majority of these groups unite survivors of the LRA conflict and assist victims in advocating for their demands and pursuing their quests for justice, but also provide more practical assistance, including peer-support, income-generating activities or shared finance schemes, such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA).<sup>202</sup> While smaller groups on the community-level primarily engage in these forms of immediate practical support for survivors, quests for justice and reparations have mostly been taken up by larger claimants' associations, such as the Acholi War Debt Claimants Association (Akullo Otwilli and Schulz 2012), thereby creating hierarchies between different types of groups.

On a more conceptual level, by uniting larger numbers of survivors, groups also enable victims to more widely disseminate their demands and needs, thereby mirroring findings from other studies across different cases (see above). As articulated by a member of an umbrella victims' group, "[w]hen we organize

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<sup>202</sup> Locally referred to as *bol cup*, various forms of savings and farmers group existed prior to the conflict in Northern Uganda (Allen 1987), and therefore, the current post-conflict groups qualify as a "continuation of local methods of self-help and income generation", although their function "now extends to providing some form of non-material comfort too" (McDonald 2014: 256).

ourselves we can raise our voices and make them be heard by the government in order to receive help" (Akullo Otwili and Schulz 2012: 2). The post-conflict context in Northern Uganda continues to be characterized by restrained access to services for conflict-affected communities. Many survivors often do not benefit from any of the developmental programs implemented by either the Ugandan government (such as the Peace and Recovery Development Plan (PRDP)) or by the countless non-governmental agencies, mainly due to a lack of practical measures or their inaccessibility for rural communities in particular. This creates a vacuum of provisions and assistance for the majority of victims of the conflict (*Interviews, 3 March; 17 March; 8 June 2016*). In light of this, and in attempts to respond to their war-related challenges, survivors across the sub-region began to construct their own forums to articulate their voices and advocate for their demands (McDonald 2014: 255; RLP forthcoming). In a variety of ways, such groups therefore constitute key avenues "in which communities [are] coping with the legacy of the conflict" (McDonald 2014: 255).

Varying in their composition, some groups bring together different categories of victims within one association, while others primarily unite specific (sub-)categories of survivors. Focusing on gender, some groups, such as the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN), provide a platform for conflict-affected women who have returned from LRA captivity with children born as a result of rape (Amony 2015; Stewart 2015). Additional groups of female and male survivors of sexual violence exist (Apiyo and McClain Opiyo 2015). The remainder of this section specifically focuses on support groups of male sexual violence survivors.

### **7.3.2. Male Sexual Violence Survivors' Groups in Uganda**

The existing groups of male survivors of sexual violence in Uganda all receive support through the Refugee Law Project (RLP) (Dolan, Shahrohk et al. 2017). In addition to one umbrella association in the north, RLP also works with two other male survivors' groups in Uganda: the *Men of Hope Refugee Association Uganda* (MOHRAU) in Kampala, established in 2011 and comprised of over 100 members who are refugees from East Africa's wider Great Lakes Region (*Interview, 12 April 2016*); and the refugee support group *Men of Peace* (MOP), established in 2013 and located in Nakivale in south-western Uganda, the country's largest refugee

settlement, uniting more than 230 members from neighboring countries across the region (Men of Peace 2014).<sup>203</sup>

In these two groups, survivors' harmful experiences of sexual abuse intersect with their marginalized status as refugees living in Uganda, implying additional vulnerabilities and challenges, such as for instance no (or restricted) legal status, limited access to income-generating activities or insufficient social support networks, among others (*Interview, 2 June 2016*; Edström, Dolan et al, 2016). Both associations, although to varying degrees, advocate for the rights of male refugee survivors of sexual violence on the international, national and communal level (Men of Hope 2015a). The groups' activities "include community awareness raising, sensitization, advocacy, and documentation of sexual violence against refugee men and boys" (Edström, Dolan et al. 2016: 1). For instance, members of both groups have participated in the first and second South-South Institute (SSI) on sexual violence against men in boys in 2013 and 2015 in Uganda and Cambodia respectively.

### **7.3.3 The *Men of Courage* in Acholiland**

While these two associations have produced audio-visual materials (Men of Hope 2015b) or annual reports (Men of Peace 2014; Men of Hope 2015a), no such materials exist about the group from Northern Uganda. Therefore, the background information about the *Men of Courage* in this section, derived from the field research findings underpinning this study, constitutes an empirical contribution. The male survivors who participated in this study are all members of *Men of Courage* (see Chapter 2), and are all survivors of male rape perpetrated by the Ugandan army (see Chapter 5.3).

#### ***Background***

During the first meeting of the South-South Institute (SSI) on Sexual Violence against Men and Boys in Kampala in July 2013 (SSI 2013), individual male survivors from Acholiland had the opportunity to engage with other male survivors from within and beyond Uganda. They were, however, not yet organized as a group.

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<sup>203</sup> Although the *Men of Hope* and *Peace* have no immediate link to the conflict in Northern Uganda and do not include survivors from Acholiland, I nevertheless briefly introduce them here for further contextualization and specifically because of their foundational connections to and cooperation with the *Men of Courage* in Northern Uganda.

Inspired by the recently established *Men of Hope* and *Peace* associations, individuals from Northern Uganda expressed their motivation to form a group for male survivors in the Acholi sub-region, which was consequently formed during the Institute. During the Institute, these male survivors from Northern Uganda were referred to as men of extraordinary courage, for openly coming forward and sharing their stories (*Workshop 4*). In relation to this, one interviewee explained that "when elders speak out about [sexual violence], it takes particular courage" (*Interview 17 June 2016*), thus coining the group's name: *Men of Courage*.

Composed of three sub-groups scattered across the Acholi sub-region (*Workshop 4*),<sup>204</sup> the *Men of Courage* umbrella-group is much less organized and centralized in comparison to its partnering associations in Kampala and Nakivale. Northern Uganda's vast geographical area and the widespread occurrence of sexual violence against men across large parts of the north (see Chapter 5) imply logistical and organizational challenges of uniting survivors from different locations under the umbrella of one association (*Interview, 28 April 2016*). During one of the workshops, representatives from the different sub-groups expressed their interest in further uniting the group and setting in place a more formalized and centralized structure, in order to provide members with better access to and benefits from developmental programs provided by the government and non-state actors alike (*Workshop 4*), a goal toward which the umbrella-group is currently working. The chairperson of one of the three sub-groups articulated that "[w]e want to transition our status as a group to become an association to be registered with the sub-county [...] so we can be assisted" (*Workshop 4*). In addition to these three sub-groups, another group previously existed. Following the death of their chairperson, however, members dispersed and the group dissolved, demonstrating the dependency of smaller groups on strong individual leadership.

As with other survivors' associations in different contexts (see Chapter 7.2.2), there are some differences among members within as well as across the different groups. Some members are more engaged and active as well as more powerful and influential than others, and speak out more in comparison to others. The umbrella association's chairperson takes on a more prolific role (RLP 2014a) and regularly represents the

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<sup>204</sup> As explained in more detail in the methodology chapter, for ethical reasons around protection and safety, I do not include exact locations of the groups.

groups in public meetings, while other members primarily engage internally, participate to a lesser extent or do not regularly attend meetings.

### ***Activities***

Overall, the groups carry out a variety of activities, including peer-support, and members have received basic training by RLP to provide psychological support for counseling one another (*Interview, 4 May 2016*). Additional activities include organized income-generating activities. One of the groups, for instance, cultivates bee-hives to generate a small profit by selling honey from which members benefit financially (*Workshop 3*). The same group also organizes a saving scheme (under the umbrella of a VSLA) for members of the groups and collectively conducts agricultural work (*Workshops 3,4*). Members of the groups have also received psychological and physical rehabilitation at St. Mary's Hospital Lacor outside of Gulu town, under the Beyond Juba Project (BJP)<sup>205</sup> run by RLP (*Interview, 23 June 2016*). According to survivors, such activities have helped them to respond to their everyday post-conflict challenges, including poverty and dependency. The *Men of Courage* chairperson explained that "the members of the group have decided that they should not be spoon-fed but that they can stay on their own and fend for themselves without living in poverty like before" (*Fieldnotes, 2 June 2016*).

According to survivors, the groups also enable members to collectively deal with and respond to stigmatization. "We are now in a group and it is harder to stigmatize us", one male survivor explained (*Workshop 2*), while another informant attested that "prior to joining the group, there was a lot of community stigmatization but now we know how to deal with it" (*Workshop 2*). While the stigma surrounding male-directed sexual violence prevails, for those survivors whose experiences of sexual abuse are known among the community and who are consequentially stigmatized, the groups constitute a support network to cope and engage with these community reactions. Similarly, various survivors believe that the groups' activities of advocacy, as further explained below, and the comfort of being in a larger group with other survivors can potentially reduce the levels of stigma (*Workshop 4*).

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<sup>205</sup> More information about the Beyond Juba Project (BJP), especially in relation to wider peace-building and transitional justice processes, is provided in Chapter 8. Also see: [www.beyondjuba.org](http://www.beyondjuba.org) [last accessed 25 September 2017].

## ***Challenges***

Despite such benefits, however, the groups continue to face numerous challenges. For instance, although some members attested that even though the groups partially helped survivors to deal with numerous social consequences and harms, stigmatization at times prevails and continues to negatively affect them. One participant explained that "even now that we are organized, the people in the community still name-call us and stigmatize us. We still have to meet in silence" (*Workshop 3*). Consequently, meetings are sometimes held in secret, and some of the groups exist more or less undercover. One of the groups, for instance, is officially registered as a VSLA and does not publicly identify as an association of male survivors of sexual violence in order to avoid potential stigmatization within the community. Numerous survivors believe that a larger group of male survivors would draw attention and suspicion, thus having the reverse effect of what has been explored above, and evidencing the ambivalent role and positioning of these groups and of male survivors of sexual violence in Acholiland. Linked to fears of stigmatization are security threats by fellow community members and state agents, which affected some of the groups and their members (RLP forthcoming). Such threats have been brought up continuously in the workshop discussions, by survivors who, after breaking their silence were threatened and accused of sabotaging the government by talking about sexual violations carried out by the state army (*Workshop 4*).

Lastly, the groups currently find themselves in a somewhat ambivalent situation, where they are heavily dependent on outside actors, especially on RLP. As articulated by one survivor within the group, "we were unsure about how to help ourselves until RLP assisted us" (*Workshop 4*). At the same time, survivors emphasize their motivation to mitigate this dependency and transition towards a more independent and organized association themselves. This poignantly illustrates the complexity of victim dependencies in situations where survivors' groups are closely linked to civil society actors (see de Waardt 2016).

## **7.4. Analysis - Survivors' Groups and Justice**

Deriving from the above illuminations of the roles and positioning of victims' association in transitional justice, and the empirical contextualization of the *Men of*

*Courage* support group in Northern Uganda, in this section I analyze male sexual violence survivors' groups in relation to justice. Drawing from empirical data collected in this study, I argue that survivors' groups in Northern Uganda address male survivors' gendered harms, thereby creating pathways through which their members can attain justice.

The majority of male survivors of sexual violence who participated in the workshops attest that they felt the survivors' groups constitute a form of justice. For instance, in the last two workshops, all participants strongly agreed that their participation in the groups is a form of justice in itself (*Workshops 3,4*). For the majority of respondents, "justice means to be in a group with other survivors" (*Field Notes, May 2015*). To illustrate, one survivor articulated that "[b]eing in a group has been helpful to us [...] so that we can get the justice that we wanted and deserve" (*Workshop 2*). As emphasized by yet another male survivor, being in a support group "is one sense of justice in a way that we now are together and we are seen and recognized as those people who underwent the specific kind of atrocities, but we are together" (*Workshop 1*). Various service-providers working with male survivors of sexual violence similarly confirmed that "being in a group can be a sense of justice for most of the survivors" (*Interview, 1 April 2016*) and that "coming together in a group is also about attaining justice at their level" (*Interview, 4 May 2016*).

But how can survivors' groups be understood in relation to justice? Building upon male survivors' viewpoints, I argue that groups create pathways to justice in four fundamental ways: (1) by helping survivors to re-negotiate their gendered identities (2) by mitigating isolation, ostracism and exclusion through (re-)establishing relationships; (3) by providing safe spaces for survivors to share their stories and exercise agency through story-telling as a culturally-resonating form of justice; and (4) by aiding survivors in the struggle for recognition of their harmful experiences. From the perspectives of male survivors, these four aspects of the groups respond to survivors' sexual and gendered harms, and thus can be understood as contributing to justice on the micro-level. In this reading, survivors' groups constitute a conduit through which justice for male survivors can be conveyed. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, each of these four aspects is explored in separate sections, with support from empirical data applied to layered theoretical arguments.



### 7.4.1. Re-Negotiating Gendered Identities

I argue that groups aid male survivors in a process of re-negotiating their gendered identities, that have been impacted because of the sexual violations (see Chapter 6.2), and that this constitutes an integral component of a process of justice. Survivors' groups thus respond to survivors' compromised masculinities as one of the most prevalent harms resulting from male-directed sexual violence.

The peer-support that the groups engage in is based on a theoretical-conceptual model of positive psychology (Joseph and Linley 2008) that "takes into account the role of social interactions and support in how people process traumatic events" (Edström, Dolan et al. 2016: 17). Through this collective peer-to-peer support, survivors develop "a critical awareness about their situation" which in turn can facilitate a mutual, collective process of "unpack[ing] the causes and impacts of these experiences" (*ibid.*: 28). Engaging with these effects "has a deep and liberating influence on [their] individual sense of personhood and self-worth" (*ibid.*) and is important for survivors to re-negotiate their gendered identities, although clearly additional components and processes may be necessary (see Richters et al. 2013).

RLP director Chris Dolan explained that "those groups allow [survivors] to re-establish a sense of social identity and a sense of being respected again [...]. Being in a group [...] helps to give back a sense of being recognized as an adult and *as a man*" (Select Committee 2015) [emphasis added]. In Chapter 6, I highlighted how sexual violence impacts on male survivors' gendered identities in a myriad of ways.<sup>206</sup> According to respondents, the groups help to respond to these gendered effects and thus to re-negotiate their gendered identities as men. As articulated by one survivor, "before we came together, we had a lot of feelings of being less of a man but since being in a group, the feelings [...] have reduced" (*Workshop 3*).

These dynamics unfold because of the numerous benefits associated with being in the groups, such as peer-support and collective economic activities. According to one survivor, being in a group "economically empowered us and it psychologically rehabilitated us" (*Workshop 3*). For instance, because of the groups' income-generating activities, male survivors are re-enabled to contribute to the provision of

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<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, in Chapter 4 I have theorized how justice for men can often depend upon a restoration of their masculine identity, including masculine and patriarchal status, power and privilege.

their families, as they are expected to by the Acholi model of normative hegemonic masculinity (see Chapter 6). Through the collective income-generating activities, the groups thus contribute towards a longer and multi-faceted process of re-installing male survivors in their role as providers for their families, one of the central components of the Acholi model of hegemonic masculinity (see Chapter 6.4.3; Dolan 2002). This immediately addresses their gendered harms and initiates a process of reversing the displacement from gendered personhood (see Chapter 6.5), thus constituting a harm-responsive procedure that remedies male survivors' experiences and needs and also re-enables them to reconnect with their gendered identities as men.

However, criticism may be raised, especially from a feminist standpoint, that the activities of the group thereby (re-)install and enforce patriarchal gender orders. In many ways, supporting male survivors to re-gain and re-attain traditional masculine roles, responsibilities and positions can further entrench hetero-patriarchy and gender inequalities (Pankhurst 2008). This can stand in stark contrast to feminist projects of gender justice (see Ní Aoláin et al. 2011; O'Rourke 2013), which seek to dismantle these very patriarchal orders and relations (Enloe 2004). In Chapter 4.5, I have theorized that justice for men impacted by conflict, including male sexual violence survivors, may often depend on a return to and restoration of masculine privilege that rests on hetero-patriarchal and oppressive gender orders (see MacKenzie and Foster 2017). MacKenzie (2012) previously argued that throughout the post-conflict and transitional justice literature, a 'return to normal' in the aftermath of war, as advocated for by male survivors of sexual violence, often implies a return to particular forms of patriarchal gender orders. Notions of justice for conflict-affected men, including male sexual violence survivors, can thus rely on oppressive and heteronormative gender norms, identities and hierarchies, therefore potentially involving compromises with unintended consequences for gender equality (Boesten 2014).

As explored in Chapter 6, however, men across Acholiland are evaluated against the dominant model of hegemonic masculinity, by themselves but also their wives, families and communities, and are considered to be less of a man if they are unable to live up to and fulfill these social requirements. For male survivors to transition and 'remake a world' (Das, Kleinman et al. 2001), re-negotiating their gendered identities

is crucially important. As emphasized by respondents, re-enabling them to contribute to their families and communities contributes to this process of re-connecting with manhood (*Workshop 2*). At the same time, research with the *Men of Hope* support group in Kampala finds that "[t]he collective consciousness-raising within the group has also begun to challenge many members' stereotypical ideas around masculinity and manhood, as well as gender equality and views on women" (Edström, Dolan, et al.: 40). In many ways, the engagement in the group and the sensitization and awareness-raising through the collective sharing of experiences facilitate a process of forming new types of masculinities for male survivors. In the case of *Men of Hope*, for instance, "several members appear to reject many traditional inequitable norms and ideas" related to masculinities (*ibid.*). This aligns with my own observations from Northern Uganda, where male survivors at times demonstrated a rejection of traditional and often restrictive and harmful ideals and conceptions about masculinities (*Workshops 1-3*). For instance, one survivor during the workshops explained that "being a man in our culture means [...] that you cannot be weak. This meant that we could not admit to what happened to us and could not seek any support, which really made it worse for us" (*Workshop 2*). Through the activities and engagements in the group, male survivors thus begin to re-negotiate their own gendered identities shaped by new (and possibly more gender egalitarian) understandings of masculinity.

Support groups thus aid male survivors in facilitating a process of re-negotiating their gender identities, and thereby respond to the violations' immediate gendered effects. Groups therefore contribute towards 'the right way forward in the aftermath of wrongdoing' (Porter 2013), and thus to justice, for male survivors.

#### **7.4.2. Re-Establishing Relationships and Mitigating Isolation**

The groups furthermore aid male survivors in (re-)establishing relationships, primarily among themselves within an intra-group setting. Indirectly, although to a lesser extent, groups also aid male survivors in re-negotiating relations with their families, communities and social networks, which were previously impaired because of the sexual violations and the resulting stigmatization (see Chapter 6.6.2). According to my informants, to (re-)establish these relationships mitigates the isolation (*Workshops 1,3*), which prior to joining the groups characterized male

survivors' lived realities, thus constituting an important component of 'a right way forward in the aftermath of wrongdoing' (Porter 2013). Especially in a highly relational and communal society such as the Acholis (p'Bitek 1986), relationships are integral and necessary for the preservation of highly valued social harmony (Porter 2013), and the restoration of relations is a paramount component of Acholi justice understandings and practices (see Chapter 4.6; Baines 2005).

Male survivors emphasized that "justice for us [...] means re-establishing relationships, amongst us and with families and communities" (*Workshop 3*). A key-informant likewise explained that one of the major justice-related concerns for male survivors is "to restore trust and rebuild relationships that were damaged because of the rape" and that "groups can help with that" (*Interview, 10 May 2016*). As previously evidenced (see Chapter 6.6.2), one of the fundamental harms resulting from the sexual violations is that male survivors' relationships, including with their families and communities, have been heavily impacted and compromised, and that as a result, many male survivors live in isolation, ostracism and social exclusion. Finnström (2003) writes that in Acholi culture, "[t]o be forced to live in solitude, a total restriction of the ordinary life, disconnected from family and relatives is very distressing" (70). During the workshops, participants emphasized that joining the groups aided them in connecting with other survivors and in establishing relationships, and that some of the activities within the groups further helped them to (re-)integrate in their wider communities (*Workshops 2, 3*; see below), thereby immediately responding to these harms.

Although primarily employed to deal with the restoration of relationships between victims and perpetrators (Mallinder 2014), and only to a lesser degree also between survivors and communities (Zehr 2003), restorative justice theories nevertheless offer important conceptual insights to understand how the re-building of relationships amongst survivors (and between survivors and their wider communities) links to justice (see Chapter 4.4.2). Llewellyn and Philpott (2014a) emphasize that restorative justice is primarily about addressing "the range of harms that violence causes to human relationships [and] to restore relationships out of these variegated harms" (4). Restorative justice theories are therefore relevant to this discussion because they assume human connections and relations, which male survivors seek to rebuild, as "a starting point for thinking about what justice means"

(Llewellyn and Philpott 2014b: 7). A restorative and relational conception of justice thus seeks to remedy the range of harms caused by violence to human relationships (*ibid.*: 4). As evidenced by the findings presented in this section, for male survivors, groups can help to (re-)establish previously damaged relations in a forward-looking and future-oriented restorative conception of justice (*ibid.*). Another defining character of restorative justice is its commitment to reintegration over isolation, for which communities must create "reintegrative opportunities for [...] the victim" (*ibid.*: 12). Applied to the context of this study, survivors' groups can constitute the first step in such a process of reintegration over isolation, though more measures are needed for this to suffice.

### ***Mitigating Isolation and Escaping Loneliness***

According to respondents, groups also help to mitigate isolation and escape loneliness, which prior to joining the groups was often characteristic of survivors' lived realities. Based upon research with members of survivors' associations in post-conflict Peru, de Waardt (2016) argues that "a motivation for participating in the activities of the [victim-survivors' associations] has to do with being in the company of others who have experienced the same type of hardship" (445). This poignantly reflects the viewpoints of many respondents in this study: "Bringing us together like this helps us to understand that we are not alone but that others are also affected and that it also happened in many other places", one male survivor described (*Workshop 4*). Another participant similarly attested that "coming together in a group made us more courageous", and that "it helped us to come out and be comfortable among other people" (*Workshop 2*). A key-informant further explained that,

[male] victims are not feeling safe in any spaces, except for sometimes in their homes, but especially in cases in which [the violation] happened in their home or compound, they even do not feel safe in their home [...]. As a result, they do not feel safe anywhere, with the only exception being the group (*Interview, 4 May 2016*).

Another survivor likewise expressed that "our coming together [in the group] also brought a family aspect and gives us a sense of belonging together" (*Workshop 1*). Therefore, by providing safe spaces for male survivors and by bringing them together, the groups contribute towards mitigating isolation and "challeng[e] the

reasons for marginalization and ostracism experienced by male survivors" (Edström, Dolan et al. 2016: 6). Edström, Dolan et al. (2016) further argue that "within the peer support groups, feelings of isolation and hopelessness are countered by the building of relationships with other men that understand a shared reality" (28).

Discussing how conflict-affected communities in Sierra Leone "were able to find peace and justice by regaining a sense of normality [...] through everyday practices", Martin (2016: 401) furthermore shows how groups of survivors provided a space for rebuilding relationships and re-establishing social connections. Through "creating spaces where war-related experiences can be re-moulded and relationships repaired" (*ibid.*: 400), the groups hence contribute towards what Veena Das (2007) terms the "descent into the ordinary" (6) in the wake of un-ordinary war-related lived realities, helping to recover life. In many ways, conflict-affected communities transitioning out of armed conflicts are longing for these everyday experiences and a sense of normality (Baines 2010; Das and Kleinman 2001; Meinert and Whyte 2016). Similar to the sentiments expressed by the respondents in this study, Martin (2016) argues that "these seemingly mundane interactions aided people in moving away from feelings of isolation [...] towards feeling a greater sense of community" (409-10). These diverse dynamics thereby illustrate that in the aftermath of violent conflict, the everyday can be a crucial "space of negotiation and renegotiation of social relationships that make life meaningful" (Baines and Rosenoff Gauvin 2014: 282), and thus of social repair.

In many ways, therefore, the social support provided within the groups responds to male survivors' harmful experiences of social invisibility (Honneth 1995), misrecognition (Haldemann 2009) and humiliation (Dolan 2014). This is not to suggest, however, that the previous experience of being abandoned can be entirely negated. Stauffer (2015) argues that "not being heard or being ignored impacts how the past resonates in the present" (3). But Stauffer (2015) also suggests that to counter mitigation and isolation, "[a] survivor will need broad social support that functions as a promise that, though she [or he] was once abandoned by humanity, that will not be allowed to happen again" (7). Hence, victims' support groups can be instrumental to countering abandonment. Stauffer argues, the "conditions of the surrounding world will make all the difference to a person trying to create a livable present moment in the wake of past harm" (*ibid.*: 129). She specifically illustrates the

strength that survivors can gain from support groups and supportive environments in order to break out of the isolation and loneliness (*ibid.*). Edström, Dolan et al. (2016) further echo such claims with their proposition that "the nature of peer-to-peer support helps [to] build a sense of belonging that assists survivors of violence to overcome the resulting stigma, isolation and erosion of trust and dignity" (28). At the same time, different aspects of the groups, such as the communal income-generating activities, contributed to re-enabling male survivors to provide for their families, which sometimes also catalyzed a longer process of re-establishing relationships with their families and wider communities.

Deriving from these premises, I argue that this sense of belonging together and this process of (re-)establishing relationships through the groups as experienced by male survivors who are members of *Men of Courage* constitutes an integral element of 'a right way forward in the aftermath of wrongdoing' (Porter 2013), and of justice as a social project navigated by survivors themselves (Baines 2010).

#### **7.4.3. Agency, Voice, Story-Telling and Transitional Justice**

The groups further create safe spaces for survivors to share their stories, voice their concerns and exercise agency. Dolan describes that "with the groups we are able to create platforms for them to speak for themselves" (Select Committee 2015). In this section, I argue that survivors' groups contribute to justice by enabling survivors to exercise agency, articulate their demands and engage in a process of story-telling, as a culturally-appropriate component of wider transitional justice processes (see Baines and Stewart 2011). In this capacity, the groups further contribute towards remedying survivors' gendered harms of exclusion and isolation caused by the sexual violations (see Chapter 6.2.2.), and respond to the silencing of survivors' experiences.

With regard to agency (see Björkdahl and Mannergren 2015), one central concern for transitional justice is that the professionalization of the field has led to the emergence of transitional justice entrepreneurs (see Madlingozi 2010) who are "speaking on behalf of victims [...]" (McEvoy and McConnachie 2013: 498). The risks associated with this include "re-silencing victims, negating their potential for agency and reproducing the sense of powerless [...]" (*ibid.*; see Obradovic-Wochnik 2013). In many ways, the groups stand in contrast to these problems of speaking for others

(Alcoff 1991),<sup>207</sup> specifically by offering survivors a platform to speak for themselves, to share their stories and to articulate their voices and concerns (see Lind and Tyler 1988). Referring to one survivor, the group offers "a venue where I can talk freely about what happened to me and others listen to me and acknowledge my story" (*Workshop 2*). During group meetings, male survivors regularly sit together and talk about their experiences in an environment where they feel safe and protected. "When we meet and sit together, we can talk freely about what happened to us, because everyone understands and had the same experience", another male survivor described these gatherings (*Workshop 2*). The groups thus facilitate safe spaces for story-telling (Jackson 2013), which can link to wider transitional justice processes (Baines and Stewart 2011). According to Jackson (2002), storytelling provides possibilities for subjective experiences to become social (see Ross 2003b). Jackson writes (2002: 245),

Stories make it possible for us to overcome our separateness, to find common ground and common cause. To relate a story is to retrace one's steps, going over the ground of one's life again, reworking reality to render it more bearable. A story enables us to fuse the world within and the world without. In this way we gain some purchase over events that confounded us, humbled us and left us helpless. In telling a story we renew our faith that the world is within our grasp.

In a seminal article on gendered storytelling in Northern Uganda, Baines and Stewart (2011) evidence "the relevance of storytelling to the field and practice of transitional justice" (3). According to Acholi scholar Okot p'Bitek (1986), cosmology and morality in Acholiland are expressed most prominently through the oral tradition (see Baines and Stewart 2011; Rosenoff-Gauvin 2013) and storytelling constitutes a philosophical act. Baines and Stewart (2011) explain how the "Acholi communal practice of *wang-o* (telling stories around the fire pit) is an everyday practice of inviting discussions of social life" (4), thus constituting a culturally appropriate space to voice one's stories and experiences (5).

Applied to the context of male survivors' groups, meetings do not necessarily take place within the context of *wang-o*. But for their gatherings, survivors often choose the comforting shade of a mango tree or the seclusion of a grass-thatched hut as

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<sup>207</sup> As noted in the introduction, feminist critique in particular has previously highlighted that speaking for others is "arrogant, vain, unethical and politically illegitimate" (Alcoff 1991: 6).



culturally familiar venues. Indeed, two of the workshops with members of the groups were held within such localities. Within this context, stories are not necessarily told for external purposes, such as breaking the silence, but more so "to those who tell them, for survivors to testify to other survivors" (Baines and Stewart 2011: 16). As theorized by Ross (2003b), stories within the context of story-telling "are particular instances, synopses of experiences, told at particular times for particular audiences and located in specific contexts" (332). Linked to the process of re-negotiating identities and re-establishing social relations, Baines and Stewart (2011) argue that "stories told among survivors, in informal settings [...] provide a space in which survivors might renegotiate their social marginalization and insist on their innocence and self worth" (3). In the wake of violence, "storytelling restores humanity through the reconstruction of one's life story" (*ibid.*). Corn tassel, Chaw-win-is and T'lakwadizi (2009) similarly argue that storytelling implies the potential to reconstitute families, communities and social relations, all of which are crucial aspects in 'remaking a world' (see Das and Kleinmann 2001), or in social processes of attaining justice.

Baines and Stewart (2011) therefore claim that "storytelling [...] becomes a form of justice making that restores the imbalances of individual value" (14). Drawing on my data, I argue that their claims are transferable and applicable to the situation of male survivors in support groups in Northern Uganda, which give survivors a voice, enable them to exercise agency and share their stories in safe spaces that are not sanctioned by the overall silencing of sexual violence against men. Survivors getting together in groups thus qualifies as what Das and Kleinman, inspired by the ideas of Nancy Fraser (1995), refer to as the "creation of alternate (public) spheres for articulating and recounting experience silenced by officially sanctioned narratives" (Das and Kleinman 2001: 3). The capacity of these groups to facilitate an alternative platform for story-telling and articulating voices must consequently be situated within the context of a vacuum of official forums or public spaces to talk about sexual violence against men (see Chapter 7.2.1).

Although the groups generally enable survivors to share their stories and narrate their testimonies in a peer-to-peer setting, some intra-group silences nevertheless remain. Reflecting prevailing hierarchies among members, the workshops demonstrated that some men spoke more frequently, and shared their experiences and articulated their

demands more freely compared to other members. Often, this unequal distribution of voice, power and decision-making capacities within the groups is conditioned by the survivors' age and/or social status, as well as by how long they have been members in the group.

At the same time, narrating and recounting harm can never be an easy task, neither in official spaces, such as publicized truth-telling initiatives (see Anyeko et al. 2012; Hamber and Wilson 2003; Byrne 2004) nor in alternative fora. As theorized by Ross (2003b), stories "may render testifiers vulnerable" (332), and telling stories can indeed have "unintended consequences" (Das and Kleinman 2001: 21; see Stanley 2009), such as long-term negative emotional and psychological implications (Guthrey 2015; De Ridder 1997). The safe environment of the victims' groups is therefore crucial to lay the soil for supportive spaces where survivors can tell their stories on their own terms, at their own pace, and for a particular audience within a familiar and protected setting (also see Ross 2003b; Jackson 2002), to mitigate some aspects of the potential vulnerability arising from narrating harmful experiences. Retaining the stories within the safe confines of the groups also implies that survivors can narrate their experiences without necessarily having to fear negative repercussions, including social stigmatization, shame and further humiliation. Further, since the acts of story-telling are restricted to an intra-group setting, but are not told for outside consumption (see Baines and Stewart 2011), some of the previously detected challenges of story-telling within the context of truth commissions, such as the potential co-opting, external reproduction and politicization of individual testimonies (see Ross 2003a; Hamber and Wilson 2003), arise less prominently in relation to the groups. As articulated by one survivor, "the group is a place where we can share our testimonies in dignity" (*Workshop 3*), while another survivor proclaimed that in the group "I can talk freely about what happened to me without having to fear any consequences or negative reactions" (*Workshop 2*).

Overall, and despite some potential drawbacks of intra-group settings and the nature of testifying, my analysis supports claims that localized storytelling initiatives can contribute towards a wider process of attaining justice, when accompanying (or accompanied by) additional transitional justice components, echoing findings by Lundy and McGovern (2008) or Hackett and Rolston (2009) from Northern Ireland. In particular, story-telling within the groups enables male survivor to exercise agency

and articulate their voices, to counter the silencing of Acholi male rape victims and their experiences, thereby responding to prior harms and contributing to justice.

#### **7.4.4. Survivors' Groups and the Struggle for Recognition**

Situated within a context where male sexual harms are silenced, survivors also want their harmful experiences to be recognized, among themselves, but also by the wider society, outside actors and the government.<sup>208</sup> In this section, I concentrate on how groups aid male survivors in obtaining recognition of their harmful experiences, amongst themselves and societally, arguing that this significantly contributes to a process of justice, by way of responding to the systematic marginalization of survivors' experiences.<sup>209</sup> In making my arguments, I link male survivors' views to the recognition-theoretical conception of justice introduced earlier (see Chapter 4.4.4; Honneth 1995; Haldemann 2009).

I claim that within the context of Northern Uganda, recognition of sexual violence against men is important because of the severely under-acknowledged and silenced character of these crimes. At the same time, however, recognition of male survivors' experiences and harms can take on an ambivalent character, as it carries with it the possibility for negative social consequences, such as additional social stigma and communal isolation (see Kendall and Staggs 2005). Against this background, through the groups male survivors primarily seek wider societal recognition, of their experiences and of themselves as survivors, rather than localized and individualized recognition on the community-level. I argue that survivors' groups, at least to some extent, enable male survivors to operate within these spatial nuances and influence the respective level and audience for recognition.

#### ***"To me, justice is recognizing suffering"***

During the workshop discussions, various male survivors attested that "for justice, we need our violations to be recognized" (*Workshop 4*). Edström, Dolan et al. (2016) quote a male survivor who "would wish that the issues of sexual violence against

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<sup>208</sup> In this context, where the government was responsible for the perpetration of these crimes, demands for government acknowledgement imply perpetrator acknowledgement. Official government acknowledgement and recognition as fundamental justice needs for male survivors will be discussed separately in the next chapter.

<sup>209</sup> However, wider societal recognition through the groups must often be accompanied and sustained by official government (and thus perpetrator) acknowledgement (see Chapter 8.2).

men be recognized in the entire world" (31). Fittingly, as we completed the second workshop discussion, one of the survivors got up to leave, and turned his back to us. The back of his shirt, provided by the International Criminal Court (ICC),<sup>210</sup> read: "to me, justice is recognizing suffering" (*Workshop 2*).

According to the survivors who participated in this study, recognizing sexual violence against men and survivors' experiences necessitates breaking the silence surrounding these crimes. "If we keep the silence, we cannot move forward", one male survivor stated, while other participants vehemently agreed (*Workshop 4*). Similarly, the former *Men of Hope* President<sup>211</sup> reiterated that "we can't just suffer in silence" (*Interview, 12 April 2016*), while the *Men of Courage* chairperson emphasized the need for breaking the silence: "What we need is to open up, share our stories and create awareness. We must reach out to all powers that everyone can be a victim of SGBV" (RLP 2014a: 6).

For male sexual violence survivors in Acholiland, the overall silencing of their painful experiences can entrench further harms. A community leader from Awach, where male-directed sexual violence was particularly widespread (see Chapter 5.3), confirmed that "the rape is the first part of the violation from which they suffer, but the silence and not being able to talk also makes them suffer in isolation, even up to now" (*Interview, 12 May 2016*). Reflective of the lived realities of Acholi male survivors of sexual violence, Haldemann (2009) theorizes that "by silencing the victims, their personal and social grievances have no reality. Thus, one's suffering is reduced to a clandestine experience - overlooked and forgotten. This [...] adds to injury, and one can describe its devastating effects as 'the wounds of silence'" (693; also see Mertus 2004; Kelsall and Stepakoff 2007; Obradovic-Wochnik 2013; Stauffer 2015).

During the workshops, it became evident that for survivors, "being in a group is a way to break the silence" (*Workshop 4*) in the public sphere and on a societal level. As outlined by the *Men of Courage* chairperson, the groups' "aims and objectives are to break the silence" (*Field notes, 2 June 2016*). Thereby, survivors' groups imply the

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<sup>210</sup> The shirt was in celebration of the Day of International Justice on 17<sup>th</sup> July, and likely given to the survivor during one of the Court's outreach activities in the region.

<sup>211</sup> For contextual clarification on terminology: In interviews and during the workshops, members of the *Men of Courage* group from Acholiland used the term 'chairperson' to refer to the group's leader, while *Men of Hope* and *Men of Peace* members used language of 'president'.

potential to initiate a procedural transition from silence to recognition. During the 6<sup>th</sup> Institute for African Transitional Justice (IATJ) in Northern Uganda, Dolan emphasized the need to consider transitions from silence to acknowledgement as a micro-level form of transitional justice (*Field notes, 1 June 2016*). In this reading, male survivors' groups can initiate a transformation from vulnerability to agency, but also a process of attaining justice.

According to the perspectives of survivors, the groups' engagement in advocacy is thus expected to contribute to breaking the silence on a societal level, and to some degree nationally and internationally, as well. For instance, individual members have participated in different meetings and forums like the South-South Institute (SSI) or IATJ to raise awareness about male survivors' experiences and advocate for their demands. However, these meetings and gatherings are primarily attended by professionals or selected representatives, but generally not by community members. Therefore, and in close cooperation with RLP, selected members have participated in community screenings of RLP-produced documentaries about sexual violence against men, in order to raise awareness and break the silence among the community. For instance, in May 2016, a video screening of the documentary 'They slept with me' in Amuru district was attended by approximately 500 community members (*Field notes, 28 May 2016*).<sup>212</sup> The *Men of Courage* chairperson, whose narrative is featured in the documentary (see RLP 2014a), was present at the screening and afterwards engaged in a discussion with community members.

Overall, however, despite the groups' objectives of breaking the silence and despite some success in this regard, sexual violence against men and male survivors' experiences continue to be marginalized and silenced, by external actors and within official discourses and local accounts of the conflict alike. According to survivors themselves, therefore, more and continuous work is needed to obtain societal recognition of their harmful experiences (*Workshops 3, 4*).

### ***A Critical Approach to 'Speaking Out' and 'Breaking the Silence'***

Nevertheless, caution must be taken to critically reflect on assumptions of a linear process of recognition that may come from 'speaking out' and 'breaking the silence'.

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<sup>212</sup> The attendance of approximately 500 community members at this screening was an unexpectedly high turn-out (*Fieldnotes, 28 May 2016*).

Empirically, 'speaking out', and obtaining recognition rarely ever is a unitary and coherent process (Hamber and Wilson 2003). Although acknowledgement and recognition are often assumed to be straightforward consequences of testifying about experiences (see Agger 1992; Agger and Jensen 1990; Herman 1992), such processes are much more complex and can involve unintended and potentially harmful consequences (Ross 2003b; Das and Kleinman 2001). Inspired by Ross (2003b), I therefore restrain from "assuming an unproblematic link between 'voice' and 'dignity' and between 'voice' and 'being heard'" and ultimately recognition (327). As Hamber and Wilson (2003) write in reference to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "it should not be assumed too easily [...] that 'Revealing is Healing'" (37). Simply speaking about these violations and experiences can thus not be expected to lineally translate into recognition, and can likewise not be assumed to be a universally healing, redemptive and liberating exercise (see Broneus 2008; Byrne 2004; Hamber and Wilson 2003; Kidron 2009; Herman 1992; Ross 2003b). Rather, as argued by Hayes (1998), what fundamentally matters is "how we reveal, the context of the revealing, what it is that we are revealing" (43), and how the revealed is responded to and engaged with.

At the same time, and specifically applied to the situation of male sexual violence survivors, publicly speaking out about their harmful experiences of sexual abuse can have unintended and potentially socially damaging consequences for Acholi male survivors (see above; Das and Kleinman 2001; Colvin 2002). Male survivors often do not want their families or communities to know what happened to them (Chapter 5.3), thereby indicating important spatial nuances with regard to where and by whom recognition is to be obtained. These geographical dimensions are poignantly illustrated through the case study of a male survivor, who has sought wider recognition of his experience by publishing his account in an online newspaper (Owich 2014a).<sup>213</sup> In his home village and even within his family, however, nobody knows about his experience. He explains that,

from 1986 to 2013, I only disclosed it to [the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP)] and to RLP and later on to the newspaper. But here I don't talk about it, I keep it confidential because from the people from here, I feel stigmatization.

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<sup>213</sup> The story, published in 2014 and thus twenty-eight years after the violation occurred, includes his full name, location and a picture of him.

When people are drunk, people will stigmatize me and undermine me and that will undermine my dignity as a human being (*Field notes, 15 February 2016*).

This example illuminates the ambivalent situation of survivors seeking recognition of their experiences on a societal level, but not within their own communities or by their families. Instead, recognition on the local level can possibly lead to stigmatization and exclusion, and thus potentially entrench further harms, rather than relieving them. Speaking out as part of a therapeutic process thus implies the danger to have these shameful and degrading experiences (semi)-publicly known, not only abstractly or confined within the groups, but also locally, which in turn implies the risk of further social stigmatization and exclusion. Likewise, although the motivation to speak about their experiences applies to various survivors seeking societal recognition, it cannot be generalized across all survivors within the groups.

Similarly, survivors' incentive to speak up about their experience and therefore 'break the silence' often only seems feasible and desirable in the contemporary post-conflict context. Many informants emphasized that they are only hoping to obtain recognition now, at times thirty years after the violations occurred. While the conflict was ongoing and in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 Juba Peace Agreement, "the silence surrounding these crimes has been protective" (*Workshop 4*). As noted by Baines (2016), "silence is often a strategy of survival in violent times, and enables those threatened to navigate difficult situations to protect themselves and loved ones" (19), illustrating that preserving silence can also be a way of exercising agency (see Kidron 2009). In relation to these temporal nuances of recognition, Veena Das (2007) reminds us of the "difference between the time of occurrence and the time of telling, sometimes conceptualized as the difference between historical truth and narrative truth" (96).<sup>214</sup> For sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, this difference between the time of occurrence (1986-1992) and the time of telling (2011-present) is striking.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Transitional justice examples from across the globe, such as for instance East Timor (Guthrey 2015; Kent 2011) or Northern Ireland (Hamber and Wilson 2003), illustrate this temporal divergence between the occurrence of conflict-related human rights violations and truth-telling processes.

<sup>215</sup> These temporal dimensions affirm the restrictions of the timing and timeframes of many institutionalized transitional justice processes, such as for instance truth commissions with short and limited mandates (Hayner 2002; Hamber and Wilson 2003), and the limits of seeking secular formal justice through court systems.

## ***Theoretical Reflections - Recognition-theoretical Conceptualizations of Justice***

To conceptualize these linkages between recognition and justice within the context of groups, I draw upon the recognition-theoretical understanding of justice as defined by Honneth (1995) and specifically on Haldemann's (2009) utilization of recognition to transitional justice processes (see Chapter 4.4.4).<sup>216</sup> Haldemann's use of the concept primarily refers to formal contexts of justice, and institutionalized transitional justice mechanisms in particular. Albeit differentiated from this focus, my application of a recognition-theoretical idea of justice to survivors' groups further stretches the analytical boundaries of the recognition-justice frame.

The theoretical discussion in Chapter 4.4.4 showed that violence, humiliation and injustice can be measured as the absence or denial of recognition (see Honneth 1995; Haldemann 2009). According to recognition-theoretical conceptions of justice, responding to and reversing this misrecognition and humiliation requires due recognition of the victims as human selves as well as of their harmful experiences (Honneth 2004). Haldemann (2009) specifically applies these conceptual linkages between recognition and justice to transitional processes. He outlines that "giving public recognition to the injured and their sense of injustice should be one of the central concerns of transitional justice [...]" (737). Haldemann examines transitional justice mechanisms (and in particular trials, truth commissions and reparations) through a recognition-lens, arguing that each of them can deliver recognition in different ways (*ibid.*). Especially with regards to trial justice, however, Clark (2016) criticizes that "the extent to which [tribunals] can deliver justice as recognition [...] is necessary limited" (73). Identifying some conceptual shortcomings in all of these technocratic approaches himself, Haldemann acknowledges that "recognition demands more than mere legal justice" (2009: 705) and that "formal justice may fail to properly recognize the injured and their experience of uncomprehending suffering" (*ibid.*: 734).

In line with these concerns, I furthermore voice concerns about Haldemann's limiting application of recognition theories to transitional justice processes. Haldemann

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<sup>216</sup> These conceptual linkages between recognition and justice were thoroughly introduced and discussed in Chapter 4.4.4. In this section, I therefore merely refresh the reader's memory regarding this theory's most important elements as relevant for the analysis at hand.



(2009) narrows the potential utilization of recognition-theoretical conceptions of justice by emphasizing that "the kind of recognition that is an adequate response to crime should come from the offender and be presented directly to the victim" (699).<sup>217</sup> According to Haldemann, "the wrongdoer must offer recognition to the victim specifically" (*ibid.*); hence for recognition to deliver justice, it would necessarily have to be issued by the perpetrator.<sup>218</sup> Crucially, acknowledgement by the perpetrator can be fundamentally important for victims following conflict (Vollhardt et al. 2014; Staub 2006). As discussed in the following chapter, according to many respondents, official acknowledgement by the government responsible for these crimes is necessary for justice on the macro-level (see Chapter 8.2). Haldemann's (2009) narrow utilization of recognition theories, however, prevents their applicability to other processes that do not necessarily require or accommodate perpetrator participation and recognition, but that instead include wider societal recognition, both of survivors themselves and of their harms.

In fact, Honneth's recognition-theoretical conception of justice, upon which Haldemann's arguments are based, does not explicitly necessitate recognition by perpetrators (Honneth 1995). Other recognition theorists, such as Taylor (1992) or Turner (2007) similarly do not condition recognition to be delivered by perpetrators, but rather more broadly "through interaction with others who matter to us - what George Herbert Mead called 'significant others'" (Taylor 1992: 32; also see Mead 1934). Such a broadened understanding of recognition aligns with Honneth's (1995) emphasis for the need of inter-subjectivity (71-73), which in turn similarly derives from Mead's notion of the 'I'.<sup>219</sup> This emphasis on inter-subjective human recognition enables a wider utilization of recognition beyond perpetrators.

Analyzing the Women's Court in Bosnia-Herzegovina within a recognition-conceptual framework, Clark (2016) demonstrates that "the Court represents a successful example of justice as recognition" (87), even though the proceedings did

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<sup>217</sup> In this capacity, Haldemann's (2009) conception corresponds with the notion of acknowledgement in relation to justice (see Chapter 8.2), as well as with a relational and restorative conception of justice (see Llewellyn and Philpott 2014a).

<sup>218</sup> Although not directly specified by Haldemann (2009), I suggest that the perpetrator here can include the individual committing the act, as well as the institutional command of the respective act. In Haldemann's writing, however, the individual perpetrator features more prominently.

<sup>219</sup> Feminist legal scholar Fionnuala Ní Aoláin outlines how Mead's notion of the 'I' fundamentally related to the conception of 'me', a "cognitive device and generally arises from reflection and social interaction" (Ní Aoláin 2012: 22).

not involve perpetrators, but rather delivered recognition through a dyadic process with "a public audience who came to hear [the women's] stories" (*ibid.*: 74). Clark's analysis thus evidences that justice as recognition can also be achieved without the involvement of perpetrators, but in a dyadic interaction between survivors and the wider public, or what Haldemann (2009) broadly theorizes as a "moral stand-in or authoritative figures" (702) or 'significant others' (Honneth 1995; Mead 1934). Applied to the context of this discussion, male support groups can facilitate such a dyadic interaction among male survivors, as well as between survivors and (selected) outside audiences.

In line with some of the critique articulated here, Clark (2016) furthermore argues that Haldemann's conceptualization is "somewhat weak in explaining exactly what justice as recognition entails in concrete terms" (85). Haldemann (2009) himself acknowledges that "a fuller treatment of the subject [...] would give a much richer account of how such recognition can be achieved in the aftermath of mass atrocity" (732). In light of such criticism, I emphasize that my analysis of male survivors' groups offers a richer account of how justice as recognition can be achieved via wider societal recognition of male survivors' harms and experiences, facilitated through groups. I thus conclude that survivors' group can (at least partially) contribute to justice as recognition, despite the lack of perpetrator involvement.

Further echoing Clark (2016), I similarly outline that we need to be mindful that the "symbolic justice as recognition" must be "developed into a more tangible and substantive form" (85). For Haldemann (2009), this can be achieved through apologies, reparations and positive symbolism, for instance (732). In the following chapter, I show that for the initial recognition through survivors' groups to be manifested, additional justice-related measures and processes at the macro-level may often be needed. Groups thus initiate a process of recognition as justice, which must be accompanied by additional means and procedures at different societal levels.

## **7.5. Implications for Transitional Justice**

Ultimately, the process of facilitating justice through the groups as discussed in this chapter is distinct from how justice is commonly theorized in transitional justice literature (see Chapter 4). Justice as approached here is not primarily about ensuring or protecting rights in accordance with rights-based liberalism, but instead about

responding to harms by way of re-negotiating impacted identities, restoring broken relationships and obtaining recognition in non-institutionalized settings and among survivors themselves (see Stanley 2009; Kent 2012). Technocratic and prescriptive transitional justice measures are often ill-equipped to achieve these relational and social components of justice, and are often unavailable and/or inaccessible for conflict-affected communities. Such is certainly the case for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda.

Within this context, I echo Sharp's (2013) call for an interrogation of the "peripheries of transitional justice", beginning with an examination of processes that are traditionally situated outside the dominant transitional justice framework. According to Sharp (2013), broadening and pluralizing the global transitional justice project would "involve a greater embrace of participatory and community-level approaches to justice rooted in local norms and traditions" (152). He adds that an interrogation of the peripheries would produce "a more holistic approach to the scope of justice issues addressed in transition" (*ibid.*). Throughout this chapter, I have engaged with Sharp's argument, by interrogating two transitional justice peripheries: male survivors of sexual violence as a neglected group of victims situated along the margins of justice processes; and survivors' groups as participatory measures as contributing to justice, positioned outside the dominant transitional justice framework.

In this chapter, I have shown that in a context where the formal justice system is inaccessible for male sexual violence survivors and where institutionalized transitional justice processes are irresponsive to male survivors' harms, groups offer an avenue for survivors to engage with their experiences and thereby attain a sense of justice on their own terms. My findings thus support Martin's (2016) assessment that "[...] justice is not something that happens to or for post-conflict societies, but [that] individuals employ their own agency in facilitating these processes [...]" (414). Lundy and McGovern (2008) likewise emphasize that "there is a need to foster agency by thinking imaginatively outside the 'prevailing transitional justice box'", adding that "the first step to developing strategies is to create spaces for people to determine, shape and develop solutions for themselves" (292). Tapping into these larger debates about participatory and alternative avenues of attaining justice, I have sought to show how survivors' groups, which fall outside the "prevailing transitional

justice box" (*ibid.*), can foster agency and create spaces for survivors to develop strategies themselves to attain justice on a micro-level.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that we ought to institutionalize and categorically include survivors' groups as integral components of wider dealing with the past processes. This would further contribute towards expanding and exhausting the scope and framework of transitional justice (Lambourne 2014; Subotic 2012), which is already attributed with an extensive list of measures, mechanisms and normative meanings (Gready 2010). Further including and integrating a whole range of participatory, emancipatory and bottom-up processes under the transitional justice umbrella risks further over-burdening an already overwhelmed attempt to deliver justice for victims and societies after conflict and in political transitions. Despite these conceptual challenges, especially in contexts where official and institutionalized processes are not available or irresponsible to certain harms, survivors' groups can be considered as alternative or complementary avenues to justice, or as contributing towards a larger process of attaining justice, and can thus imply tangible progress and value for survivors of conflict.

## **7.6. Conclusion**

By interrogating how male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice, this chapter addresses a prevailing empirical lacuna in the literature (see Chapter 1). The analysis in this chapter evidenced that within a vacuum of redress for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda (Dolan 2014; RLP 2013), survivors' groups imply the potential to address male survivors' gendered harms in a myriad of ways, thereby creating pathways to justice. By supporting male survivors in re-negotiating gender identities and re-establishing relationships, and by offering an avenue for survivors to articulate their voices, exercise agency and demand recognition, groups thus constitute gender-sensitive and harm-responsive avenues for survivors to enact their own ideas of justice on their own terms and on the micro-level (Baines 2010; Kent 2012; Martin 2016). According to the perspectives of survivors, groups address and counter many of their sexual and gendered harms, including compromised gendered identities, isolation, silencing and misrecognition, and therefore create important pathways towards justice.

In light of these findings, I argue that survivors' groups imply the potential to move beyond the constraints of formalized and institutionalized measures, often characterized by gendered limitations, barriers and blind-spots. The findings presented in this chapter thus carry important empirical and conceptual implications for the study of transitional justice, by expanding our understanding of how to achieve justice for an often neglected and marginalized population of survivors within the absence or irresponsiveness of formal mechanisms and beyond the purview of institutions. Contributing to an emerging scholarly debate about justice on the micro-level and in participatory dimensions (see Baines 2010; Lundy and McGovern 2008; McEvoy and McConnachie 2008), my analysis shows that group's enable survivors to exercise agency and determine 'a right way forward in the aftermath of wrongdoing' (Porter 2013) for themselves and on their own terms.

Groups, however, must also be seen as one piece in a larger puzzle of a wider process of justice. Deriving from the micro-level activities and engagement within the groups, additional justice-related needs, concerns and priorities at the macro-level emerge, to be explored in the following chapters.

## Chapter 8: Gendered Justice for Male Sexual Violence Survivors

### 8.1. Introduction

If survivors' groups contribute to justice on the micro-level, and constitute one component within a wider process of redress, then what additional measures at the macro-level are required to deliver justice for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda?<sup>220</sup> This chapter focuses on this empirical puzzle, and seeks to deepen an understanding of how Acholi male survivors conceptualize justice. I likewise analyzes to what extent and how (existing and proposed) transitional justice measures in Northern Uganda respond to survivors' needs and demands, thereby evidencing a vacuum of gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice in response to male sexual harms. Juxtaposing the contemporary transitional justice landscape in Northern Uganda with male survivors' views on justice, I also investigate whether the country's prescriptive post-conflict justice approach corresponds with Acholi male survivors' particular views. Complementing the previous chapter, this examination constitutes the first ever systematic and empirically-guided analysis of Acholi male survivors' perspectives on justice, and the findings presented here advance an understanding of how to deliver justice for male survivors of sexual violence, a sub-category of victims situated along the margins of on-going justice debates. In this chapter, I also answer the different research questions guiding this dissertation and address numerous empirical conundrums within the literature.

In addition to survivors' groups (see Chapter 7), the workshops foregrounded three central themes as potential avenues of attaining justice. Each characterized by a diversity of at times competing views, these themes form the framework of analysis in this chapter:<sup>221</sup> (1) official government acknowledgement; (2) criminal prosecutions; and (3) reparations, including a) material compensation and b) physical rehabilitation. The structure that I impose in accordance with these themes represents the views expressed by my respondents, how they spoke about what justice means to

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<sup>220</sup> While macro-level justice is sometimes understood as the justice needs of societies (see Kanyangara et al. 2014), the macro-level in relation to justice as understood throughout this thesis refers to processes situated at the national and societal macro-level. I also acknowledge that individual and collective needs can be, and often are, different from societal needs (Hamber 2009).

<sup>221</sup> The numbering of these three themes does not represent a hierarchy of importance, but rather structurally shows that government acknowledgement links to and underpins the two other themes.

them, and how to achieve justice. Although acknowledgement can be conceptually linked to (symbolic) reparations (see Hamber and Palmary 2009), I discuss these two elements separately, to treat acknowledgement as a theme of equal weight, thereby reflecting the importance placed on such processes by the survivors who participated in this study. Other prominent justice measures, such as truth-seeking processes or traditional justice practices, both of which feature prominently in debates about transitional justice in Uganda, were not raised by the survivors in the workshop discussions, and are thus excluded from this analysis. The themes included in this analysis thus reflect the justice-related priorities and needs of the male survivors who participated in this study, contextualized within transitional justice literature and theories (see Chapter 4). My analysis demonstrates that these diverse justice measures are frequently linked and inter-dependent, thereby evidencing that transitional justice processes often require to be externally coherent (de Greiff 2008). It is important to note, however, that survivors' justice-related needs are not necessarily static, but potentially evolve and change over time (see Chapter 9.4; Robins 2011).

At the core of this chapter lies the observation that despite a heterogeneity of perspectives, a consensus prevails amongst survivors that justice processes need to respond to their uniquely gendered harms as a result of the sexual violations (see Chapter 6). In particular, official government acknowledgement, which can be materialized in various ways, may address the marginalization of survivors' harmful yet silenced violations. Reparations, and especially material compensation and physical rehabilitation, are expected to re-enable male survivors to provide for their families and thus live up to socially constructed gendered expectations and responsibilities. Based on these findings, I argue that most Acholi male sexual violence survivors seem to desire 'justice as a better future' (Nickson and Braithwaite 2014: 449), in which they are able to fully participate in community life and re-negotiate their previously impacted masculine identities.

The analysis throughout this chapter is structured across three parts and in accordance with the three justice-related themes of acknowledgement, prosecutions and reparations. In each of the sections below, I illuminate survivors' viewpoints on these justice components through the lens of transitional justice theories and with a masculinities focus (see Chapter 4). Survivors' perspectives are contrasted with each

other and positioned relative to the contemporary transitional justice landscape in Uganda. Prior to concluding my arguments, I draw out implications from my findings for transitional justice debates.

## **8.2. Official Government Acknowledgement**

Throughout this section I argue that official government acknowledgement constitutes a prime justice need for the majority of male survivors of sexual violence who participated in this study. International standards on reparations, such as the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation (UN 2005), include official state acknowledgement as a form of (symbolic) reparations (see Hamber and Palmary 2009). However, I present this discussion on official government acknowledgement separately from more general views on reparations in Chapter 8.4, thereby reflecting the importance placed on such measures by the survivors who participated in the study. This separation highlights that male survivors viewed these measures to be different yet inter-linked. Since acknowledgement immediately links to criminal justice and reparations, I begin my analysis with this theme.

Furthermore, in theoretical terms, official perpetrator acknowledgement closely links to the notion of justice as recognition (Honneth 1995; Haldemann 2009). This is locally reflected in linguistic and cultural terms: in Acholi language, acknowledgement translates as *niyee*, and recognition is translated as *moko niyee*; confirming acknowledgement. Recognition and acknowledgement are thus viewed as distinct yet fundamentally linked, and (full) recognition can depend upon acknowledgement. In the context of this study, acknowledgement primarily requires to be official, issued by individual and/or institutional perpetrators, whereas recognition can be offered more widely and on a societal level, not exclusively dependent upon the perpetrators' involvement (see Chapter 4.4.4; Honneth 1995, 2004; Taylor 1992).

Throughout the transitional justice literature, official and/or perpetrator acknowledgement is often regarded as a key component of delivering justice, linked to a variety of different transitional justice mechanisms (Buckley-Zistel et al. 2013; Quinn 2010), including reparations (de Greiff 2008), and especially recognition in relation to justice (Honneth 1995; Haldemann 2009). Lambourne (2009) for instance



argues that "having perpetrators acknowledge what they have done and its impact on victims can be crucial for justice (41), highlighting "the need for acknowledgement as an important part of transitional justice" (*ibid.*). Shnabel and Ulrich (2013) similarly elaborate that for justice, "victims are likely to want perpetrators to acknowledge their responsibility for the injustice they have caused" (117).

According to male survivors in Northern Uganda, "justice is when the government acknowledges what happened to us" (*Workshop 3*). Various service-providers working with male survivors in Acholiland similarly emphasized that "in terms of justice, acknowledgement by the government of the violation is crucial [...]" (*Interview, 4 May 2016*). The survivors who participated in this study thus primarily demand official, institutional acknowledgement by the government responsible for the command and perpetration of these crimes. Survivors spoke less prominently about acknowledgement by individual perpetrating soldiers, thus recognizing the government army's command responsibility. According to the male survivors who participated in this study, government acknowledgement must ideally be delivered and materialized through official statements and/or apologies. As articulated by the chairperson of one of the three sub-groups, "to acknowledge the crimes, the government should give an apology" (*Workshop 1*). Another male survivor similarly stated that "there needs to be acknowledgement in form of an apology" (*Workshop 4*). This need for official acknowledgement for harms suffered by the civilian population during the conflict in Northern Uganda is not exclusive to male sexual violence survivors, and survivors across Acholiland demand government acknowledgement for the crimes committed against them (McDonald 2014; Okello, Dolan et al. 2012; JRP 2012; RLP 2014b). What is unique about male sexual violence survivors' quests for official government acknowledgement, however, is that these crimes remain particularly silenced, marginalized and ignored compared to other violations, as explored more fully below.

### **8.2.1. The Relationship between Acknowledgement and Justice**

While the specific notion of recognition features less prominently in the existing transitional justice literature (see Chapter 4.4.4), the closely linked concept of acknowledgement in relation to justice arguably has received more sustained

scholarly attention.<sup>222</sup> Conceptually, acknowledgement links to justice and is important for victims in a variety of different ways. Previous studies have primarily focused on the psychological dimensions of victims' demands for acknowledgement (Vollhardt et al. 2014). For instance, official acknowledgement may contribute towards restoring social order and helping victims feel safer (Staub 2008). Reviewing a variety of causal factors regarding the effects of acknowledgement, Vollhardt et al. (2014) furthermore note that "acknowledgement may also validate the [victims'] experiences and enhance collective self-esteem, thereby empowering previously disempowered victim groups [...]" (307).<sup>223</sup> For de Greiff (2008), "acknowledgement is important precisely because it constitutes a form of recognizing the significance and value of persons [...]" (14), and primarily their victimization and survivor-hood, thereby illustrating the interconnectivities between acknowledgement and recognition (see Honneth 1995).

Male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda seem to seek government acknowledgement in order to obtain official and institutional acceptance of their otherwise neglected, marginalized and silenced experiences. According to one survivor,

the government should come out and acknowledge what they did [...]. In most cases, when there are big meetings, we are not recognized but they go into recognizing other vulnerable groups of people, like the disabled, the widows, the orphans. What about us? We don't have any voice and that will only change if the government acknowledges what happened to us (*Workshop 1*).

According to this perspective, government acknowledgment is needed to reverse the lack of recognition of male survivors' experiences and of the crimes perpetrated against them. Whereas a whole catalogue of conflict-related human rights violations, including government-perpetrated abuses, is increasingly brought to the fore-front within the contemporary transitional context and is even partially acknowledged by

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<sup>222</sup> This may arguably be because acknowledgement is often linked to wider reparations measures (see UN 2005).

<sup>223</sup> Vollhardt et al.'s (2014) empirical examination supports the hypothesis that acknowledgement promotes greater psychological well-being among individual victims, by addressing survivors' needs, empowering victims and restoring moral order (320), which in turn is theorized to contribute to justice and reconciliation.

the government (see Okiri 2016),<sup>224</sup> crimes of male-directed sexual violence remain marginalized and silenced. In Acholiland's heteronormative and patriarchal society, male sexual vulnerability is regarded as incompatible with hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995; Dolan 2009) and the rape of men is thus largely unacknowledged or considered not possible to have occurred. In light of this lack of affirmation, male sexual violence survivors want their experiences officially acknowledged and thereby validated.

For numerous male survivors, acknowledgement is furthermore regarded as a crucial pre-condition for accessing other remedies and responses and primarily reparations, further demonstrating the interconnectivities between different justice-related measures (de Greiff 2012; Hamber 2009). A male survivor emphasized the importance of acknowledgement as a first step to access reparations,

the government [...] needs to acknowledge what happened. What will the government do if it fails to acknowledge the acts of sexual violations in Acholiland? For the government to do something, and to for instance pay us compensation, they first need to acknowledge that they did this to us and then that would also be justice (*Workshop 2*).

Various survivors indeed articulated that acknowledgement is only meaningful if followed through with reparations, and vice versa, reparations can only be meaningful if they are provided as a means of acknowledging the specific sexual violations and survivors' harms: "If there is compensation, that means there is full acknowledgement. If it stays with just acknowledging without keeping the promise and paying, that is not real acknowledgement" (*Workshop 4*). Another male survivor similarly articulated, "reparations are only a way of justice if they come with the acknowledgement by the government" (*Workshop 4*). Such concerns align with Llewellyn and Philpott's (2014) observation that victims often criticize public apologies of acknowledgement "as being empty words if these apologies are not accompanied by reparations" (6). Therefore, acknowledgement by itself would not be sufficient, but would have to be accompanied by additional measures, such as

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<sup>224</sup> Official government of NRA-perpetrated atrocities during the early years of the conflict, however, is severely limited, and only constitutes an exception to the norm. If and where the government has acknowledged the occurrence of NRA-perpetrated violence, President Museveni has also been quick in denying any responsibility, instead blaming the loose composition of NRA cadre at that time.

compensation,<sup>225</sup> thereby supporting Hamber's and Wilson's (2003) claim that "for most people more is needed than simple recognition and acknowledgement" (43).

### **8.2.2. Gendered Barriers to Government Acknowledgement**

Obtaining government acknowledgement for crimes committed by state forces, however, is characterized by inherent cultural, social and political challenges, further exacerbated by the gendered dimensions of the violations within a hetero-patriarchal context. "The government will not acknowledge this because it happened long ago and they were the ones perpetrating it, so they will not recognize and respond", one male survivor attested (*Workshop 3*). Similarly, another male stated that,

acknowledgement is very important for us, but the biggest challenge [...] is how do we propel the government to acknowledge the wrongs committed against us? We do not have any clear way of convincing the government to do that. That is why everything lies in the hands of the government (*Workshop 4*).

Such concerns suggest a deep-seated frustration over the profound lack of measures and provisions by the government for male survivors, including a lack of affirmation of their experiences. This viewpoint likewise accentuates the centrality of official acknowledgement, while at the same time highlighting the challenges of obtaining it. As outlined by Haldemann (2009), a challenge remains as to how acknowledgement and recognition can be achieved in the aftermath of violence.

When state forces have been involved in perpetrating human rights violations, official government acknowledgement may often only materialize after regime changes (see Perera 2001). In Northern Uganda, the government from which survivors seek acknowledgement was also responsible for the perpetration of sexual violence against men twenty-five years ago. When the power structures that perpetrated widespread human rights abuses (Dolan 2009; Branch 2011) are also responsible for designing and implementing national and top-down transitional justice processes (Okello, Dolan et al. 2012; Quinn 2009), government-perpetrated crimes almost inevitably fall out of the radar of these processes. Among the conflict-affected community in Northern Uganda at large, a widespread belief and frustration

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<sup>225</sup> The discussion of male survivors' views on retributive proceedings and on reparations in the sub-chapters below similarly evidences that obtaining official recognition and acknowledgement is frequently regarded as a key outcome and goal of these processes.

prevails that without a regime change, there will be no accountability for NRA atrocities (Okello, Dolan et al. 2012; RLP 2014b). In addition to these political barriers, acknowledgement for crimes of sexual violence against men is specifically characterized by a variety of gendered, social and cultural challenges and therefore seems particularly elusive. In Acholiland's heteronormative and patriarchal setting, male vulnerability is regarded as incompatible with hegemonic masculinities (Dolan 2009), and male sexual abuse is perceived as *de facto* non-existent (see Chapter 5). Conditioned by the social stigmatization attached to male rape, some survivors themselves currently and previously do not want their experiences of abuse publically known or recognized.<sup>226</sup>

Furthermore, publicized acknowledgement for male sexual victimization can carry wide-reaching psycho-social consequences for survivors. Obtaining official acknowledgement for their experiences of sexual violence can imply the risk that male survivors may face social stigmatization from their families and communities, or that they can be criminalized for same-sexual acts. In many ways, this unveils a seeming paradox with male survivors demanding acknowledgement for their marginalized and silenced experiences, despite the potential that (public) awareness may cause social stigmatization, leading to social, societal and psychological harms. Therefore, most survivors want the government to acknowledge the widespread perpetration of these crimes, without publicly revealing survivors' identities.<sup>227</sup>

Situated within this context, the state's positioning in this regard is characterized by further complexity. Formally acknowledging responsibility for their soldiers' widespread perpetration of male rape that on the local level is frequently equated with homosexuality would stand in stark contrast to the official government standing against and criminalization of same-sexual acts (Dicklitch, Yost and Dougan 2012). Further, acknowledgement would conflict with the state's self-construction as a strong, militarized, masculinized and heteronormative actor (Dolan 2011). As a result of these combined political barriers and the gendered cultural and societal challenges which are unique to male sexual vulnerabilities, the prospect for male survivors to

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<sup>226</sup> As established in the previous chapter, silence was regarded as protective, and only now do some survivors slowly want their sexual violations recognized (see RLP 2009) and formally acknowledged by the perpetrating government.

<sup>227</sup> The case study of a male survivor in Chapter 7.4.4 illustrates these temporal and spatial nuances of male survivors' demands for acknowledgement and recognition.

have their demands for official government acknowledgement met any time soon appears particularly unlikely.

### **8.2.3. In the Absence of Official Acknowledgement - Local Memorialization**

In light of this seeming impossibility of obtaining official government acknowledgement for crimes of sexual violence, however, transitional justice literature acknowledges different informal ways to acknowledge and memorialize the suffering of male survivors (Lambourne 2013; Quinn 2009). These include, for instance, communal and local monuments and memorials (Barsalou and Baxter 2007), which in a broader sense can also classify as symbolic reparations (Hamber and Palmary 2009).

In the context of Northern Uganda, since the government has not acknowledged any responsibility for the perpetration of male rape, some survivors are seeking other forms of recognition. In particular, community-led monuments and memorials, which are common ways of remembering conflict-related experiences and atrocities across Acholiland (Hopwood 2011; Victor 2007), seem to constitute a potential avenue of materializing acknowledgement for male survivors. According to one male survivor, "if you have everything, but no memorial, there will be no justice. If [...] a memorial is not there, [...] there is no acknowledgement and recognition" (*Workshop 4*).

According to a 2007 population-based survey on attitudes about justice, almost all "(95%) of the respondents said they wanted memorials to be established to remember what happened in northern Uganda" (Pham et al. 2007: 34). Across Acholiland, a whole variety of community-based memorialization initiatives exist (Hopwood 2011; Latigo 2008), including (at least) one that includes acknowledgement of male rape. In 2015, the community of Burcoro in Awach sub-county, where male rape was particularly widespread (see Chapter 5), received logistical and financial assistance of the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) to erect a monument in memory of a 1991 NRA-executed massacre (JRP 2013) that included acts of *tek-gungu* (RLP 2014b). The memorial structure takes the shape of a tree, since one of the massacre victims was tied to a tree and executed by a firing squad (see JRP 2013), and is located at the former execution spot (*Interview, 25 June 2016*). A variety of human

rights abuses and crimes perpetrated during the massacre, such as killings or acts of torture, are marked on the different branches of the tree, as depicted in Illustration V. One of the branches, clearly visible to everyone who inspects the monument from the front, reminds the viewer of crimes of 'sexual abuse' and 'rape', as well as 'sodomy', which is how male rape is often referred to in English across the region.



*Illustration 5: Monument in Burcoro, Awach sub-county (25 June 2016).*

For male survivors from Burcoro, this monument and its specific mentioning of sexual violence against men is an important aspect of recognizing their experiences and thus obtaining justice, even though it is not a form of official government acknowledgement (*Interview, 25 June 2016*). Such a localized memorialization initiative cannot replace government acknowledgement, but rather function in addition and complementary to official state recognition. These informal memorials ultimately serve a different purpose than official government acknowledgement and memorialization efforts. They strive to make visible the communities' recognition of sexual violence against men and demonstrate that male sexual violence survivors should be treated equally to victims of other conflict-related experiences. Therefore, in a context where male sexual violence survivors are marginalized and silenced, community-based memorialization of male-directed sexual violence can carry its own particular value.

Despite a recent shift of attention to localized approaches in transitional justice (see Chapter 4.3.3), however, only little "attention has been paid to *unofficial* local

practices of remembering, commemorating and responding to the violence of the past" (Kent 2011: 435). In post-conflict East Timor and within the context of a prescribed, top-down and UN-led transitional justice process, characterized by various shortcomings, "East Timorese survivors are commemorating massacres [and] constructing memorials" (Kent 2011: 436) on the local level and on their own terms. Kent writes, "the locally embedded, collective nature of these practices suggests that they take place in a very different realm to the 'official' transitional justice process" (*ibid.*). In contrast to externally imposed and top-down transitional justice processes, bottom-up memorials are often much more accessible and foster victims' participation and agency (see Barsalou and Baxter 2007). According to Kent (2011), "local practices of memorialization and commemoration can be understood as highly localized and deeply personal attempts to 'remake a world' by remembering the past" (442).

Despite various cathartic effects of localized memorials (Barsalou and Baxter 2007) and their potential to recognize conflict-related experiences, however, caution must be taken not to idealize and romanticize local memory practices in transitional settings, which are often characterized by their own hierarchies, exclusions and silences (Casey 2010). Localized memory practices in Northern Uganda are rarely purely local, but instead often externally assisted, if not even externally driven, by national civil society organizations or international organizations (see Hopwood 2011; Latigo 2008). This is the case with the JRP-supported memorial in Burcoro (*Field notes, 17 May 2016*).

At the same time, as indicated by the gendered critique of local and traditional justice (Chapter 4.3.3), localizing memorialization efforts often means that they are situated in highly heteronormative and patriarchal societal settings. In this context, male sexual and gendered harms are likely to be further marginalized by localized memorialization efforts. Previous research across different sites likewise demonstrated that symbolic reparations and memorialization initiatives primarily privilege civil and political rights violations against men, thereby silencing gendered harms, and violence against women in particular (Rubio-Marin 2009; Hamber and Palmary 2009). Therefore, while numerous community-driven monuments exist across the conflict-affected north (Hopwood 2011; De Ycaza and Fox 2013), the



memorial in Burcoro, to the best of my knowledge, constitutes an exception, as it is the only one with a reference to sexual violence against men.

### **8.3. Criminal Justice and Prosecutions**

Criminal prosecutions constitute another prominent justice-related theme that emerged during the workshops. In this section, I demonstrate that survivors' views on criminal justice and prosecutions are characterized by different perspectives. Some survivors generally viewed criminal proceedings as potential avenues of attaining justice. At the same time, however, most survivors indicated a lack of faith in the criminal justice system, and did not view prosecutions to be feasible in the current social and political context of Northern Uganda. Conditioned by this lack of faith and the seeming impossibility of prosecutions, criminal justice therefore did not seem to be a contemporary priority for the majority of survivors in this study.<sup>228</sup>

In many ways, male survivors' views thus stand in contrast to the legalist orientation of the global transitional justice project, (Campbell et al. 2007; McEvoy 2007; Robins 2011), which continue to present criminal prosecutions as the benchmark from which other justice processes merely follow (see Fletcher and Weinstein 2002). My findings also specifically differ from existing scholarship on the nexus between transitional justice and conflict-related sexual violence against men, which predominantly emphasizes retributive means (see Chapter 1.3.4; Schulz 2015).<sup>229</sup> Similar to much of the earlier feminist literature on redressing sexual violence against women, which placed a heavy emphasis on prosecutions (see Campbell 2007; Mertus 2004; Otto 2009), the few existing studies on transitional justice and male-directed sexual violence almost exclusively focus on judicial accountability (see Lewis 2009; Manivannan 2014; Sivakumaran 2013), portraying prosecution as the optimal method to deliver justice for male sexual violence survivors (see RLP 2013).<sup>230</sup> However, the question of criminal justice for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda is characterized by unique gendered and contextual

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<sup>228</sup> In making this contemporary observation, I recognize that these views may change over time, for instance if Uganda was to experience a regime change or if survivors' other justice-related needs were to be met.

<sup>229</sup> Crucially, these few existing studies are descriptive and conceptual, but not empirically-guided by the perspectives of male sexual violence survivors themselves.

<sup>230</sup> Only in the past ten years did scholarship on transitional justice and gender increasingly shift its focus from its early occupation with prosecutions (Campbell 2004) to other justice mechanisms and processes, such as gender-sensitive and transformative reparations (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine 2015; Rubio-Marin 2009).

challenges, which include the lack of legal coverage of male rape by the Ugandan justice system (RLP 2013) as well as informal heteronormatively gendered practices and beliefs with regards to male sexual vulnerabilities.

Below, I present and compare male survivors' different perspectives on criminal justice and position them relative to legal, judicial, political and societal challenges regarding prosecutions, to interrogate survivors' expectations and conceptions in relation to contextual transitional justice developments.

### **8.3.1. Positive Attitudes towards Prosecutions**

Some male survivors in Northern Uganda viewed criminal prosecutions as avenues for attaining justice. According to one male survivor, "I want the issue [the crimes] to be taken to court, because if the discussion is pushed to court, I would see justice" (*Workshop 4*), while another survivor expressed that "to me, justice is fighting impunity" (*Workshop 1*).

Interestingly, however, most survivors did not seem to prefer trials as means to retributively punish perpetrators, but rather for different ends. During the workshops, no male survivor explicitly expressed a desire for criminal accountability and punishment of the perpetrators out of retributive motives (see Chapter 4.4.1). Other prominent and common-place objectives of (international) criminal justice, such as deterrence (see Glasius 2015) or the investigation of command responsibilities to identify wider patterns of crime and violence (Meloni 2007), were similarly not raised by the survivors as desired outcomes of prosecutorial processes. Apart from one exception of a survivor for whom prosecutions "can block the continuation of the same problem [of male rape]" (*Workshop 1*), thus indicating a desired deterrent effect of prosecutions, survivors did not focus on deterrence as a desired outcome of criminal prosecutions.

Instead, several survivors explicitly raised prosecutions as means to materialize acknowledgement and access reparations. One male survivor attested, "if we take this to court, it means our violations are acknowledged at the official level, and we will also be able to get reparations" (*Workshop 2*). Another male survivor suggested that "we first ask the government to acknowledge and then compensate. If they do not agree, we need to take them to court to get the acknowledgement and compensation through the courts" (*Workshop 4*). Further illustrating these

perceptions of prosecutions as avenues to obtain acknowledgement and reparations, another male survivor stated that "justice is when the government will be taken to court and acknowledged what happened to us" (*Workshop 4*). Contextualizing these perspectives, one of my key-informants explained that "some victims want prosecutions because they see that as an avenue for accessing reparations and compensation" (*Interview, 17 March 2016*).

Retributive justice theorists have previously emphasized that criminal proceedings can contribute towards acknowledging and recognizing victims' suffering as a crucial ingredient of delivering justice (Akhavan 1998; Kritz 1996). Nevertheless, recognition is primarily seen as only a by-product of criminal prosecutions, rather than its primary aim or objective.<sup>231</sup> Holding perpetrators criminally accountable remains an imperative leitmotiv for prosecutions (Orentlicher 1991), accompanied by, amongst others, deterrence (Glasius 2015). For many male survivors in Northern Uganda, however, it appears that official acknowledgement through the courts constitutes the primarily desired outcome of judicial proceedings, expected to result in compensation in the future. This emphasis on acknowledgement through prosecutions illustrates the inter-linkages between different justice measures (see de Greiff 2008), and the centrality of acknowledgement and recognition for male survivors' conceptions of justice (see Chapters 8.2; 7.4.4).

Prosecutions were therefore often viewed as a potential avenue of pursuing acknowledgement and for accessing compensation, rather than for holding perpetrators individually criminally accountable, and as an end in themselves (see Osiel 1999). This may likely be the case because prosecutions would not necessarily address survivors' contemporary post-conflict needs. Instead of retrospectively criminalizing perpetrators, survivors prioritize processes that help them in their current situation, such as rehabilitative assistance and a return to 'normality' through reparations (Chapter 8.4). If government acknowledgement and reparations would be obtained differently - for instance through an official statement and an apology acknowledging responsibility, and/or if reparations were delivered through an administrative system - then the isolated demands for prosecutions by some male survivors could potentially dissipate. Therefore, if obtaining acknowledgement and

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<sup>231</sup> At the same time, such an approach to deliver recognition implies certain dangers and difficulties. Amongst others, court proceedings often only involve one version of a story, and can thus at best reveal a partial, if not even a biased, form of recognition (see Akhavan 1998; Mertus 2004).

recognition are the desired outcomes of trial processes, then prosecutions do not necessarily constitute the best method of redressing male-directed sexual violence. Instead, what Aukerman (2002) refers to as "goal- and culture-specific responses to mass atrocity" (43) are needed, as I elaborate below.

However, survivors' conceptions of justice are never static, and evolve over time (Robins 2011; Porter 2013). It can therefore be assumed that prosecutions for retributive purposes may grow to become a justice-related need or priority for male survivors in the future. For instance, survivors' views on prosecutions may change if other needs have been addressed, or if prosecutions appear to more realistically attainable, for example if the current government would not be in control of political and judicial power anymore. At the same time, the materialization of acknowledgement and reparations through other means could have a catalyzing effect on survivors' demands for prosecutions. In South Africa and Northern Ireland, some survivors' families' demands for criminal justice increased once other priorities, such as truth and acknowledgement, had been addressed (see Hamber 2009; Hamber and Wilson 2003; Kesselring 2016).

### **8.3.2. Negative Attitudes towards Prosecutions**

At the same time, despite these positive views on criminal justice, the majority of survivors expressed skepticism and negative perceptions regarding prosecutions. These attitudes particularly concern the feasibility of criminal proceedings, conditioned by various legal, social, cultural and political barriers, many of which are heavily gendered. This lack of faith in the criminal justice system consequently implies that prosecutions do not seem to constitute a contemporary priority for most male survivors who participated in this study.

Many respondents were aware of the technical limitations regarding the legal protection and coverage of male survivors by Ugandan law. During a discussion about prosecutions and the national justice system, one survivor noted, "the law does not prohibit male rape. We may want to take it to court but we cannot because of the law" (*Workshop 4*). Indeed, the Ugandan Penal Code (UPC) defines rape in gender-exclusive and essentializing terms, as affecting females only,

any person who has unlawful carnal knowledge of a *woman or girl*, without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or by means of

threats or intimidation of any kind or by fear of bodily harm, or by means of false representations as to the nature of the act, or in the case of a married *woman*, by personating her husband, commits the felony termed rape [emphasis added] (Ugandan Penal Code Act 1998, Chapter XIV, Section 123: 56).<sup>232</sup>

According to this definition, only women and girls are recognized as potential victims of sexual violence, thereby systematically excluding male survivors from legal protection. This, however, is neither atypical nor exclusive to men in Northern Uganda (Dolan 2014; Schulz 2015). According to research by Dolan (2014) and RLP (2013), "90 per cent of men in conflict-affected countries are in situations where the law provides no [or inadequate] protection for them if they become victims of sexual violence" (Dolan 2014: 6).

In addition to this lack of legal coverage, Uganda's criminalization of homosexuality (see Alava 2016; Bompani and Valois 2017) further renders the prospect of justice through the court system for Acholi male rape survivors to be very unlikely. When homosexuality is outlawed and criminalized,<sup>233</sup> reporting crimes of male sexual violence, which locally in Northern Uganda are often equated with homosexuality, can lead to incriminations and prosecutions of survivors themselves (Dolan 2014; Onyango and Hampanda 2011). Many respondents worried that if they officially reported the crimes to police, they would be accused of homosexuality (e.g. *Workshop 1*, 3). Hence, there are real disincentives for male victims to judicially report the sexual violations committed against them (Schulz 2015). This also shows that the judicial exclusion of male victims of sexual violence is not only composed of legal layers, but is also intrinsically linked to and compounded by informal, socially-based gendered beliefs.

In addition to these technical and gendered barriers of the formal justice system, there are immediate political restrictions with regards to prosecutions. Many male survivors noted security constraints in relation to attempts of seeking judicial means against the current regime responsible for the perpetration of these crimes. "[T]aking

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<sup>232</sup> Another common legal prohibition against forced sex in Uganda refers to defilement, "which in western contexts would typically be called 'statutory rape'" (Porter 2013: 72-3). Defilement, according to the Penal code, is when "any person unlawfully has sexual intercourse with a *girl* under the age of eighteen years" [emphasis added] (Ugandan Penal Code Act 1998, Chapter XIV, Section 129: 57-8).

<sup>233</sup> As detailed above, although the 2014 Anti-Homosexuality Act was annulled, homosexuality remains criminalized in Uganda, and is punishable by life in prison.

the government to court also implies security issues and risks. And it is of course difficult to take the sitting government to court", one male survivor noted (*Workshop 2*). To illustrate, survivors were afraid that attempts of taking the government to court would lead to repercussions, and in particular that the government army would again resort to retaliatory physical violence against them (*Workshop 4*). Often, when the state apparatus tasked with delivering justice through the national system is responsible for crimes for which redress and accountability is sought, survivors do not expect legal justice to be served and eventually give up their hopes for retributive justice (see Perera 2001). In such contexts, survivors often decide not to pursue criminal cases through the official system and instead turn to alternative approaches (Porter 2013) that may be preferred for accessibility and harm-responsiveness (Robins 2011).

The fact that the identities of most perpetrators, or of those who commanded the crimes, remain unknown to the survivors further complicates the prospects for prosecutions. Almost all acts of male-directed sexual violence in Northern Uganda were perpetrated by government soldiers originally from central or southern Uganda (see Chapter 5.3).<sup>234</sup> As summarized by one survivor,

[t]he perpetrators of this violence are majorly non-Acholis. We do not know them, we do not know where they are, and whether they are still alive, and if we want to prosecute, whom do we prosecute? Whom do we put our complaints against? We don't know [...] (*Workshop 2*).

The unknown identities of perpetrators and the fact that they now live in different parts of Uganda or potentially died in combat, and are thus not part of survivors' daily lives, seems to imply that holding perpetrators criminally accountable is less prominently of concern to survivors' perceptions of justice.

These concerns about the seeming impossibilities of judicial justice through the court system must further be contextualized in Acholis' lived reality of "a deep distrust of higher authorities to dispense justice in their interest" (Porter 2012: 81) in the contemporary post-conflict context. Many Acholis, including the vast majority of

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<sup>234</sup> This is contrary to so many of the 'complex political perpetrators' (Baines 2007) who have been abducted by the LRA, forced to commit crimes, often in their own communities, and afterwards returned to live in those very communities - a scenario which Theidon (2012) terms a situation of 'intimate enemies'.

male survivors, have lost faith in these formal systems and ways of dispensing justice (Allen 2006; Finnström 2008). Various statements illustrate this distrust in the state apparatus and its justice sector: "For me I know that with this government, if you take this issue [of the sexual violation] to court, there will be no justice", one male survivor proclaimed (*Workshop 4*). Similarly, another survivor expressed his general dissatisfaction with the system by stating that in general, "court issues delay a lot in this country [...]" (*Workshop 1*).

Conditioned by these shortcomings, the prospects for prosecutions of government soldiers on either the national or the international level are extremely low. As previously observed (see Chapter 7.2.2), the ICD under the High Court of Uganda, controlled by the current regime, is unlikely to prosecute any government-perpetrated crimes (see MacDonald and Porter 2016), let alone any crimes of male-directed sexual violence by government soldiers. In addition to the legal, political and societal constraints of the Ugandan justice system to prosecute sexual violence against men on the national level, the likelihood for international prosecutions is equally constrained. Although the ICC investigates the situation in Northern Uganda, the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) to date solely focuses on crimes perpetrated by the rebel forces, but not by the government army (see Nouwen and Werner 2010), which has been subjected to sustained criticism for its one-sidedness (Okello, Dolan et al. 2012). At the same time, the Rome Statute mandates the Court to investigate crimes committed after 1 July 2002, when the Rome Statute entered into force (Rome Statute 1998, Art. 11(1)). Since all crimes of sexual violence perpetrated against the participants in this study occurred during the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the ICC cannot investigate them (RLP 2013).

These combination of these intersecting factors - the lack of coverage and protection from the law, the criminalization of homosexuality, security constraints and the seeming impossibility of prosecuting the sitting government, coupled with deeply rooted mistrust in the Ugandan justice system and gendered societal beliefs and practices - render the prospect for prosecutions very unlikely. Conditioned by these challenges and limitations, prosecutions thus do not necessarily constitute a contemporary priority for the male sexual violence survivors who participated in this study. As argued above, these findings are contrary to dominant assumptions in the transitional justice literature generally (Fletcher and Weinstein 2002; Aukerman

2002) and on redressing crimes of sexual violence against men in particular (RLP 2013; see Schulz 2015).

## **8.4. Gender-Sensitive Reparations**

For the majority of male survivors who participated in this study, reparations in response to their harms constitute a fundamental component of justice. Male survivors' perspectives thereby reflect the centrality of compensation to Acholi conceptions of justice (Baines 2005). Male survivors' views on reparations, while diverse, primarily focus on two elements: a) material compensation, and b) physical rehabilitation.<sup>235</sup> Although the vast majority of male survivors favored and demanded reparations, a small minority held an opposing view, according to which compensation could potentially entrench gendered harms. Drawing on survivors' views, I argue that reparations, and in particular material compensation and rehabilitation, can constitute harm-centric and gender-sensitive justice mechanisms in response to male sexual harms.

Reparations are often classified to be among the most victim-centric transitional justice mechanisms (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine 2015), and a growing body of transitional justice scholarship focuses on reparations in relation to justice (see Chapter 4.3.3; de Greiff 2008; Elster 2006; Hamber 2008). In practice and implementation, reparations broadly include: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation (including access to medical and psychological care), satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition (UN 2005). Reparative payments are also constitutive elements of Acholi understandings and conceptions of justice, and are integral components in various traditional and local justice and reconciliation processes (see Baines 2005).

In the post-war context of Northern Uganda and on the state-level, both the Juba Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation (AAR) and the draft national transitional justice policy include proposals for a holistic reparations program (JLOS 2014). Thus far, however, since the policy has not yet been legislated (Otim and Kasanda 2015), a reparations program has neither been designed nor implemented,<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Acknowledgement, including official apologies and memorialization efforts can conceptually be symbolic forms of reparation (Hamber and Palmary 2009). As emphasized in Chapter 8.2, I treat acknowledgement separate yet linked to reparations, to thereby reflect the importance of such measures placed by the survivors.

<sup>236</sup> The only forms of collective reparations primarily in the form of symbolic compensation and isolated cases of rehabilitation delivered in Northern Uganda to date include rehabilitative measures



and survivors across the sub-region generally express frustration and dissatisfaction over the lack of reparative measures (RLP 2014b; UNOCHCHR 2011). As scrutinized elsewhere in this dissertation (see Chapter 7.2.2), the draft transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014), including the proposed reparations framework, are characterized by a striking absence of any considerations for gender, let alone any mentioning of (neither female nor male) sexual violence survivors.

These gendered blind-spots in Uganda are mirrored by practical and "conceptual gaps in the legal and policy framework for reparations addressing conflict-related sexual violence" globally (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine 2015: 97). As noted by Ní Aoláin et al., however, any remedies for conflict-related sexual violence, including reparations, "must be sensitive, flexible, and encapsulate gender-appropriate approaches" (2015: 110). The authors further note the importance for "reparations [to] address the immediate reparative needs of survivors of sexual harm" and that therefore, "a commitment to *transformative* reparations is critical to gender-sensitive reparations" (*ibid.*: 98; emphasis added). Transformative reparations, especially in the context of redressing conflict-related sexual violence, require to "go beyond the immediacy of sexual violence, encompassing the equality, justice and longitudinal needs of those who have experienced sexual harms" (*ibid.*: 98-99). Instead of merely returning victims to a prior status quo, transformative reparations are meant to provide survivors with "what they ought to have under fair conditions" prior to the perpetration of mass atrocities and human rights abuses (Rubio Marin and de Greiff 2007: 332).<sup>237</sup> In this capacity, transformative reparations carry important implications for feminist projects of gender justice and women's equality in transitional justice in particular (Boesten and Wilding 2015).

However, while increasing attention is paid to women's experiences and female sexual violence survivors in relation to gendered reparations (see Rubio-Marin 2009; Walker 2016; Duggan et al., 2008), albeit characterized by various limitations (Rubio-Marin and de Greiff 2007),<sup>238</sup> "tailored intervention to address male-centred

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provided by the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) of the ICC. These measures are severely limited, however, and only include survivors of violence perpetrated by the LRA and after 2002, thus excluding government-perpetrated sexual violence.

<sup>237</sup> To date there are only very few concrete instances of transformative reparations (Ní Aoláin et al. 2015). Comparable to reparations programs more broadly, a significant gap between theory and praxis prevails (Laplante 2009).

<sup>238</sup> As detailed by Rubio-Marin and de Greiff (2007), many of these recent and still rather limited developments are nevertheless characterized by numerous shortcomings and tensions, including for

sexual harms remains elusive and marginalized" (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine 2015: 109). Consequentially, "a limited understanding of who can be a victim of sexual harms means that violence against men is often unseen and unaccounted for when states and other international actors conceive and implement reparations" (*ibid.*: 97). By illuminating male survivors' perspectives on reparations, the data presented here further enrich and contribute towards debates about gender-sensitive reparations for sexual violence against men, which thus far remain absent from the literature. Nevertheless - because of the absence of reparation measures in Northern Uganda (UNOHCHR 2011), a lack of gendered consideration, and no consideration for male-directed sexual violence specifically - the prospects for male survivors to have their reparations-related demands met in a timely manner appears particularly elusive.

The majority of male survivors who participated in this study favored reparation measures in the form of material compensation, including most prominently the provision of agricultural tools, as well as physical rehabilitation, rather than monetary compensation.<sup>239</sup> These forms of reparation are seen as implying the potential to re-enable male victims to work again, which has previously been impaired as a result of the violation (see Chapter 6), and thus to provide for their families as is socially expected of them as men. Material reparation and physical rehabilitation means are thus expected to immediately respond to survivors' sexual harms in a gender-sensitive and reparative approach. The discussion and data in this section thus empirically and conceptually advance an understanding of reparations in a transitional setting through a masculinities lens, and particularly in response to male-directed sexual violence, and carry important implications for the theoretical intersections between gender, reparations and victimhood.

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instance a limited understanding of sexual harms and violations limited to rape only, thereby excluding and marginalizing a whole variety of other gender-based and sexual violations. Also see Chapter 3.3. for a sustained critique of limited conceptions of sexual violence.

<sup>239</sup> One of the challenges regarding monetary compensation is the problem of how to quantify and count the respective harm suffered, and thus determine appropriate amounts of compensation (de Greiff 2008; Hamber 2000). Since the overwhelming majority of male survivors favored material forms over monetary compensation, this challenge is not as strongly pronounced with regards to male survivors in Northern Uganda as it may be in other contexts.

### 8.4.1. Material Compensation

Many male survivors in this study primarily expressed a preference for material compensation. In particular, the provision of agricultural equipment and the restocking of livestock were anticipated to help victims in their current socio-economic situation, and thereby immediately respond to their gendered harms. Such compensation measures are reflective of types of reparations commonly included in traditional Acholi justice processes, which are "largely paid in the form of livestock" (Baines 2005: 15). I thus argue that material compensation can constitute a gender-sensitive, harm-responsive and culturally-resonating form of justice for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda. For example, one survivor emphasized,

for justice, we can ask the government to provide reparations to us, if it is in terms of restocking [of livestock],<sup>240</sup> it would be a source of livelihood and that is what I will wipe with my tears. And if it is monetary, I will also use the money appropriately knowing that it comes from my violent background (*Workshop 4*).

According to another survivor, "now that I am weak, the government could compensate me with oxen and ox-ploughs to dig and to allow me to sell stuff and support the children" (*Workshop 2*). Another male survivor attested that: "We look at justice [as] a way of compensating us, in terms of animals, such as cows and goats" (*Workshop 3*). "We should be supported and compensated; for example animals should be given to us, to be kept for us, or oxen for work to access and plough the land", yet another male survivor demands (*Field notes, 10 June 2016*). Addressing male survivors' socio-economic needs and circumstances thus constitutes a critical issue in post-conflict reconstruction and justice (see Robins 2011).

According to these viewpoints, providing male survivors with agricultural tools and/or other material provisions, as forms of compensation measures, is expected to help them move on with their lives by elevating them (back) into a position in which they can again provide for their families. I have previously evidenced that due to the sexual violations and the resulting physical and psychological consequences, the majority of male survivors were unable to provide for their families, as they are socially expected to as men and according to hegemonic masculinity expectations

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<sup>240</sup> Conceptually, the re-stocking of livestock can also be classified as a form of restitution under the wider umbrella of reparation measures (UN 2005).

(see Chapter 6).<sup>241</sup> In response to these harms, and through the provision of material compensation, various male survivors consequentially hope to be re-enabled to engage in agricultural activities or manual labor, thereby returning to a sense of normality through 'everyday' practices (see Martin 2016). From the perspectives of male survivors, material compensation, such as the provision of agricultural tools or livestock, would thus allow them to create opportunities to build a better future for themselves (see Clark 2017). Borrowing from Nickson and Braithwaite (2014), compensation would thus be about 'justice as a better future'.

In accordance with the theorization of reparative justice discussed earlier (see Chapter 4.4.3; also see de Greiff 2006; Hamber 2006), through material compensation, male survivors thus want to be restored to their physical and psychological state prior to the harm, to live up to gendered societal and cultural expectations of performing the masculine role as provider. Male survivors' sentiments thus resonate with Rubio-Marin and de Greiff's (2007) conception of gender-sensitive reparations, which must aim to "rehabilitate victims, to improve their quality of life or, at the least, to optimize their chances of recovering a minimally functional life" (331). In this capacity, the provision of material compensation would be gender-sensitive and harm-responsive, by addressing male survivors' sexual harms in a reparative capacity. At the same time, however, these processes risk re-establishing patriarchal gender hierarchies, by re-installing men as primary providers and thus elevating them back into positions of dominance and power (see Chapter 4.5; Rubio-Marin 2009).

Numerous male survivors also expressed demands for houses to be built for them by the government, as a form of material compensation. During one of the workshops, one male survivor noted that compensation would be "[w]hen they [the government] pay for you or build a house, that will help you " (*Workshop 4*). Another male survivor articulated that "I would advise that the government compensate the male victims for the violence suffered by providing them with housing to cool the hearts" (*Workshop 2*). Other forms of compensation included demands to construct health centers and schools in the areas in which the survivors live, for their families and communities to be able to benefit from such measures (*Workshops 2, 3*). These forms

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<sup>241</sup> As explained in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6, in particular the physical consequences and harms include various forms of waste and back pain, rectal prolapse and other physical injuries. The psychological harms include depression, traumata, isolation and loneliness, amongst others.

of material compensation are envisaged to benefit not only survivors directly but also their families and wider communities.

In line with these sentiments, a variety of male survivors also asked for their families to be assisted with the payment of school fees (e.g. *Workshop 2*). A recent study about survivors' experiences of sexual violence in Northern Uganda finds that the inability to pay school fees constitutes one of the greatest challenges for female and male survivors of gender-based violence alike (Apiyo and McClain Opiyo 2015). Such demands for school fees and communal schools or health centers are situated within survivors' concerns that the government "must not only compensate us but also our families" (*Workshop 1*). Summarizing these considerations, one male survivor asserted that,

we have all become very weak and if justice is to prevail, then they should look at the children that we are having and support them, for instance in school, because we don't have the ability and energy anymore to do anything to change the lives of these children (*Workshop 1*).

Due to the fact that up to thirty years after the violations, many male survivors are now elderly, their post-conflict justice-related needs thus extend to redressing not only their harms but also to assisting and supporting their families' needs, evidencing the horizontal and vertical ripple effects of gendered harms (Clark 2014). If survivors are assisted with school fees for their children (and grand-children) as one of their most prevalent challenges (Apiyo and McClain Opiyo 2015), such measures can furthermore help them to descend "into the ordinary" (Das 2006: 6), in which they can fulfill their social responsibilities towards their families.<sup>242</sup> Therefore, by favoring measures to benefit their families, male survivors are taking steps to provide for their families, given that their ability to do so through other means has previously been impaired.

On a critical note, however, many of these demands for housing and school-fees may arguably not best be situated within the frames of reparations measures and justice processes. One major critique point of transformative reparations is that they effectively do development in disguise. Instead of stretching the conceptual

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<sup>242</sup> This aspect of the ordinary or normality that many male survivors strive for is more carefully unpacked in the section below about rehabilitation as a form of reparations (Chapter 8.4.2).

boundaries and practical limits of transitional justice processes, however, scholars argue that development actors may be better equipped to address these demands (see Mani 2008; Waldorf 2016). At the same time, survivors' requests for communal infrastructure, such as schools and health centers, can be considered as socio-economic requirements and entitlements of individuals that the state is expected to deliver, rather than particular justice measures in response to specific conflict-related harms and experiences. Furthermore, survivors' demands for housing and school fees arguably do not stand in linear relationships with their sexual and gendered harms. While these needs may potentially arise from the violations' ripple effects, they do not stem directly from the crimes, and thus may not qualify to be immediately responded to by broader justice processes. Instead, including these specific socio-economic demands under a wider theory of justice implies the risk to further heighten unrealistic expectations and over-burden an already stretched and value-loaded concept (see Chapter 7.5; Andrieu 2012; McAuliffe 2014; Waldorf 2012).

Furthermore, and as indicated above, for the vast majority of male survivors, compensation is only regarded as a meaningful contribution to justice if accompanied by, or delivered as a form of, acknowledgement and recognition (see de Greiff 2008). As articulated by the survivor quoted above, "reparations are only a way of justice if they come with acknowledgement by the government" (*Workshop 4*), a normative position taken by the majority of survivors who participated in the study. According to male survivors' views, reparations thus also have an important symbolic dimension, by demonstrating "signs of recognition of victims as [...] equal citizens" (Rubio-Marin and de Greiff 2007: 331). At the same time, and comparable to survivors' views on prosecutions (see Chapter 8.2), various respondents expressed skepticism concerning the prospects of receiving compensation (*Workshops 1, 4*). Given the absence of a comprehensive reparation scheme and conditioned by a lack of any consideration for gendered experiences, and especially male-directed sexual violence, the prospect for compensation to be materialized for male survivors in the contemporary context appears particularly improbable.

#### **8.4.2. Physical Rehabilitation**

In addition to material compensation, rehabilitation as an additional component of wider reparations measures (de Greiff 2008; UN 2005) are another justice-related

priority for various male survivors who participated in this study. Psychological and physical rehabilitation measures, as necessary components of holistic peace-building interventions (see Hamber, Gallagher and Ventevogel 2014) can thus constitute integral aspects of wider transitional justice processes with a gender-sensitive reparative and transformative potential (Gready and Robins 2014; Ní Aoláin forthcoming). According to de Greiff, rehabilitation "refers to measures that provide social, medical and psychological care" (2008: 3).<sup>243</sup> During the workshops, various survivors stated that physical rehabilitation in particular can constitute a form of justice for them: "If there is any kind of physical rehabilitation [...] that would be [...] definitely a form of redress" (*Workshop 1*). According to another male survivor, "my major justice [need] is rehabilitation. So when I am physically rehabilitated, I will get healing and strength, and I will get a normal life like any other community member" (*Workshop 2*).

### ***Justice through a Return to Normality***

This emphasis on hoping to obtain "a normal life like any other community member" (*ibid.*) is crucial for understanding the notion of justice through rehabilitation, as held by many male survivors. Experiencing (a sense of) justice by way of physical rehabilitation is thereby closely linked to a return to the 'ordinary' (Das and Kleinman 2001) in the aftermath of human rights violations. According to male survivors' perspectives, physical rehabilitation through, for instance, medical treatment and psychological assistance implies the potential to transform and restore their physical abilities, for example to conduct physical labor.<sup>244</sup> Rehabilitation is thus expected to re-enable survivors to provide for their families and live up to gendered societal expectations.<sup>245</sup> Summarizing these concerns in relation to justice, one male survivor attests that "I have no energy to dig so I am thinking that if we could get treatment and rehabilitation for the health problems, that would be justice" (*Workshop 4*).

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<sup>243</sup> The Basic Principles for Reparations furthermore state that rehabilitation "should include medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services" (UN 2005: §21).

<sup>244</sup> This does not necessarily apply for elderly male survivors, since Acholi male elders are not commonly expected to be their family's primary provider and breadwinner anymore, although many of them nevertheless need and demand physical rehabilitative support.

<sup>245</sup> As previously established, survivors' harms are characterized by their inability to work and thus to provide for their families (see *Chapter 6*). This inability to provide heavily impacts upon their gendered personhood, and many survivors feel to be less of a man due to their failures to be their families' primary providers and breadwinners (see *Chapter 6*; see Dolan 2002).

Against this background, rehabilitation is expected to help survivors recover from their harms and thereby escape dependency, poverty and isolation, and to reduce their physical injuries and pain, which in turn may alleviate associated psychological symptoms (see Chapter 5.3.4). Physical rehabilitation would thus enable survivors to re-establish a sense of normality (Martin 2016) in a transformative sense. Beck (2012) explains that "normality refers to the social processes in which the structures of the everyday environment are established, reproduced and negotiated" (53). For Martin (2016), the frame of normality is an "important concept to engage with in post-conflict contexts" (401). In Sierra Leone, for instance, many survivors "were able to find peace and justice by regaining a sense of normality and were able to do this through everyday practices [...]" (*ibid.*).

Tapping into this growing debate about the *everydayness* of remaking a world (Das and Kleinman 2001) and of attaining justice (Baines 2010; Kent 2012; McDonald and Allen 2015; Perera 2001), my analysis here shows that physical rehabilitation enables male survivors in Northern Uganda to (re-)gain this sense of normality, thus fundamentally constituting the 'right way forward in the aftermath of violence' (see Chapter 4.6; Porter 2013) in a broadened sense of justice and in a gender-sensitive and harm-reactive manner. On a critical note, however, this sense of 'normality' from the perspectives of men often translates into an unequal *status quo ante*, characterized by male prestige and patriarchal privilege (see MacKenzie 2012; Rubio-Marin 2009), and thereby mirroring many of the previously detected problems of male-centric understandings of justice (see Chapter 4.5).

### ***Physical Rehabilitation for Male Survivors of Sexual Violence in Northern Uganda***

In Northern Uganda, and within a vacuum of state-administered measures, the Refugee Law Project (RLP), alongside a few other service-providers, provides rehabilitation for war victims. Under their 'Beyond Juba Project' (BJP), currently in its third phase (see [www.beyondjuba.org](http://www.beyondjuba.org)), RLP provides psychological services and physical rehabilitation measures for a variety of conflict-affected communities across Northern Uganda, including male survivors of sexual violence (RLP:



forthcoming).<sup>246</sup> As a result of these efforts, numerous male survivors within the groups have received counseling, to address the psychological dimensions of their harms. Various male survivors were also referred for medical treatment to St. Mary's Hospital in Lacor, just outside Gulu town, to attend to their physical injuries as a result of the rape.<sup>247</sup> These steps help to respond to some of the most severe harms experienced by male sexual violence survivors.

For some survivors who received physical rehabilitation under RLP's project, in the absence of state-driven reparations, these measures can constitute a form of redress and a component of justice. From a gender standpoint, various male survivors who received physical rehabilitative support explicitly attested that its outcome helped them to re-negotiate their masculine identities (*Workshops 1, 3*). "Through the medical treatment, I was able to work again and provide for my family like a man", one male survivor stated (*Workshop 1*). Other survivors who asked for rehabilitation, but have not yet received any assistance, likewise expressed that such measures can constitute an aspect of justice, which would help them to re-negotiate their masculine selves.

At the same time, however, for another sizable group of survivors, physical rehabilitation does not suffice as a form of justice if provided by RLP or other NGOs, humanitarian agencies or non-state actors, as it crucially lacks the government acknowledgement component (*Workshop 4*). According to such perspectives,

rehabilitating us should have been the responsibility of the government who committed these crimes. It is good will if RLP helps us with these measures, but not the sign of justice. When the government would come and say that they did something to me and that they help me now with rehabilitation, then that is justice to me (*Workshop 4*).

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<sup>246</sup> As part of this project, RLP also worked with and trained (mostly male) local doctors at St. Mary's Hospital Lacor to deal with male survivors of sexual violence, and sensitized them towards the nature and dynamics of sexual violence against men, including the resulting gendered and sexual physical, psychological and physiological harms. During an interview with a doctor at Lacor Hospital, however, the respondent emphasized that more sensitization with staff, including female nurses, at the hospital was needed (*Interview, 23 June 2016*).

<sup>247</sup> As elaborated in more detail in Chapter 5.3.4, these physical consequences amongst other include waist and back pain, rectal prolapse and other bodily injuries.

Another male survivor similarly stated that "if the government would have acknowledged it [the violation] and given assistance [in the form of rehabilitation], that would be justice" (*Workshop 4*).

Therefore, for various survivors, physical rehabilitation has to be provided by the government for it to be a form of justice, and needs to be accompanied by (while in itself symbolizing a form of) official acknowledgement (see de Greiff 2012). If provided by non-governmental actors, these forms of rehabilitation would rather qualify as development work, rather than as a form of justice (see Mani 2008). These views emphasize some of the critique points of reparative and transformative justice models, as raised above (see Chapter 4.4.3). Despite once again illustrating a variety of divergent perceptions with regards to different processes, such views accentuate the centrality of government acknowledgement for survivors, and its inter-linkages with prosecutions, compensation and rehabilitation.

#### **8.4.3. Reparations as Dowry? Gendered Implications**

Whilst the majority of male survivors viewed compensation positively, a small minority of survivors who participated in this study represented an opposing viewpoint. According to this (isolated) perspective, compensational payments were considered as a form of dowry (*luk*), entrenching further gendered harms. Throughout this sub-section, I discuss this viewpoint, which carries important gendered theoretical implications for reparative justice through a masculinities lens.

Previous research has demonstrated how conflict-affected communities in diverse contexts regarded reparations as either insufficient or inadequate (Hamber 2006). In Brazil, for instance, some families of the disappeared during the dictatorship interpreted attempts to compensate them "as the government's final attempt to buy their silence and close the book on the past without revealing the true facts of what happened" (*ibid.*). In Northern Ireland, for some victims' groups perceived proposals for reparations as attempts to buy them off (Hamber 2006). And, "when during the 1990's, the German government sought to negotiate a reparations settlement with victims of forced labor during the Holocaust, many of these victims objected to such reparations as 'blood money'" (Llewellyn and Philpott 2014: 2). Together, these studies explore how inadequate compensation measures can be unsatisfactory for

survivors, especially if not accompanied by acknowledgement and/or other justice-related means.

However, existing research has not yet sufficiently assessed how, through a masculinities lens, compensation may potentially entrench further layers of gendered harms. My examination here thus empirically contributes to a growing list of examples of how reparation efforts can have a reverse effect than what they are theorized to deliver. Carrying important implications for the conceptual intersections between reparations, victimhood and gender, my analysis shows how especially "monetary reparations for victims of [sexual violence] might have significant drawbacks" (Duggan et al. 2008: 210). My argument confirms that "reparations are laden with value judgments for victims" (Hamber 2008: 23), while evidencing that "one of the most important factors in determining how reparations will be sought and accepted" is to carefully consider "[...] how individuals perceive their suffering is understood, accepted and acknowledged in the social [cultural] and political context [...]" (*ibid.*). My analysis demonstrates that to fully draw out these conceptual intersections, a gender perspective is required.

### ***'Luk pe Coo?' Compensation as Dowry***

During an interview, a service-provider who previously worked with male sexual violence victims explained to me how for one survivor, compensation payments were seen as a form of *luk* [a form of dowry] paid by the government *for* the survivor, which in turn would entrench further gendered harms (*Interview, 10 May 2016*).<sup>248</sup> Curious about this perception of compensation as the equivalent of *luk*, I inquired about such interpretations in the two workshops I conducted after this particular interview. During one such discussion, a male survivor stated, and another agreed, that,

if the government would put for us houses, or pay us, it will cause stigma because the people will say that the house is because of *luk* [dowry]. The people will say that the government made you their woman and now they pay the price by putting that house for you. I feel so much stigma and for me, if they would come and pay

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<sup>248</sup> Furthermore, in RLP's documentary *'They slept with me'* (2011) a male survivor, in response to a question about justice in general and reparation and compensation in particular, provocatively and slightly confused asks: '*Luk pe coo?*', or 'dowry for men?' and continues to ask: "How can it [sexual violence against men] be compensated? The government will not accept to pay" (RLP 2011).

me, or put a house, that would be like *luk* [dowry] and it would add to that stigma and my suffering (*Workshop 3*).

A brief cultural contextualization of *luk* and its social functioning in the Acholi context is necessary for understanding this interpretation and my deduced argument. Anthropologist Porter (2013) clarifies that "*luk* is a fluid and flexible practice, which belies rigid classification" (191), thus making it difficult to define. In fact, different types or forms of *luk* exist, a full scholarly analysis of which would go beyond the scope of this thesis (see *ibid.*: 191-196). *Luk*, just as many other Acholi terms and concepts applied throughout this dissertation, is not easily translated into English. 'Dowry' might be the most applicable and acceptable conceptualization of *luk*, although not fully capturing the complex societal and cultural meaning of the term.

In Acholi culture, under ordinary circumstances, *luk* is paid when sexual intercourse becomes part of a heterosexual relationship between a woman and a man, as a form of social sanctioning of this occurrence (Porter 2013: 191; see p'Bitek 1986). In the context of Acholi marriage, for instance, the payment of *luk* is often the first step in a series of stages of "the social and legal bonds that bind people together" (*ibid.*). Either accompanying *luk* or following such payments, eventually a form of bride-wealth (*lim akumu*) needs to be paid, to officially formalize the marriage (Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014). Usually, *luk* and *lim akumu* involve the exchange of cattle, livestock and other goods or a monetary equivalent, "to be paid by the boy/man, or by his family or broader patrilineal kin to the girl/woman's family or her patrilineal kin, an exchange that both symbolizes and helps to cement a social relationship between them" (Porter 2013: 192).

Porter describes *luk* as "a customary payment that is related to acknowledging and socially normalizing a sexual relationship" (*ibid.*). She further asserts that "*luk* is a payment made as a consequence of actions - but actions that are not in and of themselves considered wrong, as long as the payment is made" (*ibid.*: 194). In this reading, once *luk* is paid retrospectively, the sexual encounter (socially expected to be heterosexual between a man and a woman) becomes legitimized and acceptable. *Luk* thus functions to distinguish "illicit from acceptable sex" (*ibid.*: 196). Consequentially, "for most Acholi, the payment of *luk* [...] is what determines where the line along the lived continuum of sexual experiences is drawn. It is what separates the socially acceptable sex [...] from that which damages it" (*ibid.*).

In general, the payment of *luk* and its social functioning is only applicable to 'ordinary' heterosexual relations between a man and a woman. Homosexual acts, adultery, defilement, forced marriages within the context of the LRA, and crimes of sexual violence against women and men fall outside the ordinary structure of *luk*, and are seen as inappropriate and threatening "the well-being of the moral community" (*ibid.*: 196). At the same time, however, in the Acholi context, what distinguishes inappropriate from appropriate sex is whether *luk* has been paid or will be paid (*ibid.*: 204). *Luk* is thus "an integral part of acknowledging that a sexual relationship took place" (*ibid.*: 193). The payment can thus be seen as legitimizing sexual acts, and once *luk* has been paid, the relationship between the individuals involved is further manifested.

### ***Compensation as Luk?***

Applying these socio-cultural conceptual reflections to the concerns articulated by the male survivors, if reparations are viewed to equal the payment of *luk*, then this payment would officiate, recognize and confirm the rape, while also reversing its illicit, damaging and harmful character. The payment of compensation, if viewed as *luk*, would furthermore create and sustain a social relationship between the perpetrator and the survivor, which from the survivors' standpoint would, of course, be highly undesirable.

Further from a gendered standpoint, the survivors' displacement from gendered personhood (see Chapter 6) would be confirmed and further manifested through the payment of reparations (if viewed as *luk*), by establishing the survivors' female role in this particular interaction. According to this interpretation, the survivor to be compensated (and for whom *luk* would be perceived to be paid) would (again) socially assume a female character. In this reading, the previous compromise of their masculine identities through the sexual violation would be sustained and further cemented through the payment of reparations, by confirming their assumed female identity. Indeed, the survivor who expressed this viewpoint feared that the community would see him as the wife of the government, who paid *luk* for him (*Workshop 3*). This would further impact his masculine identity and entrench added gendered harms. Instead of relieving suffering, for this particular survivor, the payment of reparations would rather result in the opposite, by once again

compromising his masculine identity and by aggravating the sexual violation's illicit and harmful character, thus further harming him.<sup>249</sup>

## **8.5. Implications for Transitional Justice**

Before concluding the chapter, in this section I draw conceptual and empirical implications of my arguments for overall transitional justice scholarship and practice. I focus in particular on the importance of the individuality of survivors' post-conflict justice needs, arguing that such individual priorities need to be reflected in the design and implementation of transitional justice processes to deliver harm-responsive justice for survivors.

Overall, and as demonstrated throughout this chapter, survivors' viewpoints are characterized by a diversity of at times competing views. Whereas some survivors regard prosecutions as delivering justice, others do not see retributive means as a priority. Likewise, some survivors view physical rehabilitation provided by non-state actors as contributing to justice, while others consider that rehabilitative measures can only constitute justice if linked to official government acknowledgement. Finally, while the majority of survivors demand material compensation, a small minority group views compensation as the equivalent of dowry, thus entrenching further gendered harms instead of redressing them.

This variety of perspectives among survivors should not be surprising, and has previously been documented by others, in Northern Uganda and elsewhere (see Vinck, Pham, Stover and Weinstein 2007; Robins 2011). The examples presented throughout this chapter contribute to this awareness and poignantly illustrate the individuality of post-conflict needs among conflict-affected communities, including justice-related concerns. At the same time, and despite increasing awareness, this understanding that justice needs are often highly individual and differ among survivors has not yet been fully integrated into transitional justice scholarship and practice (Robins 2011), especially in the legalistically and institutionally dominated literature. When it comes to survivors' perceptions and priorities of justice, most

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<sup>249</sup> Importantly, my exploration of this is not to suggest that such processes would factually be the case, but rather to analyze the survivors' perspectives, perceptions and fears. Essentially, this viewpoint constitutes a poignant example regarding the contextual and circumstantial individuality of survivors' justice needs (Baines 2010; McDonald and Allen 2015; Hamber 2008).

frequently, gross generalizations are made about how to deliver justice for everyone (Robins 2009; Stover and Weinstein 2004).

My analysis illustrates that justice-related needs and perspectives are essentially products of culture, cosmology, sociality and gender within each local context, and are therefore highly local in nature (Baines 2007; Waldorf 2006; Shaw 2007). Survivors' needs therefore cannot easily be transferred to other conflicts, or be generalized across and within cases (Merry 2006). In *Settling Accounts Revisited*, Diane Orentlicher (2007) questions that "given the extraordinary range of experiences and cultures, how could anyone imagine there to be a universally relevant formula for transitional justice?" (18). The example of the survivors for whom compensation would be a form of dowry poignantly illustrates these cultural and cosmological contingencies of justice needs.

In addition to these contextual specificities, my findings specifically illuminate that survivors' views on transitional justice processes are not even necessarily unified among survivors of a specific violation within one particular case. Rather, individual survivors' needs within one particular social and geographical locality often vary, shaped by survivors' micro-, mezzo- and macro-environments (see Clark 2017). As convincingly argued by Cullinan (2001), "[g]eneralised and conventionally summarised victims' expectations tend to denigrate the complex and inconsistent human identity of such victims and survivors, ignoring the extent to which needs vary from victim to victim and change across time" (19). This individuality of justice needs among conflict-affected communities inevitably raises the complex conceptual and empirical question of how to articulate broad claims in transitional and post-conflict settings, and thus carries implications for generalizability.

Institutionalized top-down transitional justice processes, which dominate practices of dealing with the past (McEvoy 2007), such as for instance the JLOS-administered draft transitional justice policy in Northern Uganda, are ill-equipped to take into account this individuality, thereby essentially doing a great disservice to survivors and their individual quests for justice (Stover and Weinstein 2004). Concurring with Robins (2011), I therefore emphasize that prescriptive, mimetic and elite-driven top-down approaches to transition must be complemented with processes that foster survivors' agency and are participatory and bottom-up (Lundy and McGovern 2006, 2008). At the same time, official processes need to be designed in more flexible ways

that accommodate survivors' voices and preferences to be incorporated into the design and implementation. The recognition of survivors' groups as a potential avenue of delivering justice in transition (see Chapter 7) is a first step into this direction.

My findings similarly emphasize the importance of consulting survivors about their post-conflict justice needs and demands prior to designing and implementing post-conflict justice processes (Robins 2009). The centrality of victim participation and consultations has previously been recognized in scholarship (Robins 2011) and practice (UN 2014) alike. The United Nations (2014) for instance, emphasizes the importance of effectively consulting victims about their perspectives on transitional justice (also see UNOHCHR 2011). Despite increasing recognition of the importance of victim inclusion and participation, however sustained engagement and consultation with victim constituencies still does not constitute an established practice for most transitional justice processes globally (Robins 2011). According to Robins (2011), the vast majority of transitional justice mechanisms are top-down and rarely driven, mandated or influenced by victims' perspectives (see Lundy and McGovern 2008).

In Northern Uganda, the draft transitional justice policy likewise recognizes the importance of victim consultations, and in part claims to have done so (JLOS 2014). These efforts, however, were limited and insufficient, and at most engaged very small and non-representative parts of the population. Generally, victim communities express frustration over the lack of consultation, frequently attesting that their views have not been sufficiently recorded (RLP 2014b; see McDonald 2014; Otim and Kasanda 2015). Prior to this study, Acholi male survivors of sexual violence in particular have not yet properly been consulted about their viewpoints on justice, neither by relevant (national or international) transitional justice policy-makers nor by researchers, thus evidencing the marginalization of male survivors' harms and experiences. At the same time, victim consultations carried out under the auspice of the government responsible for violations itself can most probably not be expected to realistically capture survivors' honest views on justice, in particular relating to redress for state-perpetrated crimes. To ensure that the voices, perspectives and needs of a broader range of victims are effectively captured, and to work toward meaningful and genuine consultations, such efforts have to be geographically and



quantitatively widespread, and ideally carried out by independent (often non-state) actors. Different groups of survivors with various conflict-related experiences across the entire conflict-affected region need to be given the opportunity to articulate their demands, voice concerns and express priorities.

Scholars, policy-makers and transitional justice practitioners would surely highlight the difficulties (and seeming impossibilities) of consulting each and every conflict-affected individual in a particular locality about his or her justice-related needs and preferences, including the challenges of being able to respond to these individually. Being aware of and concurring with these challenges, however, I nevertheless stress the importance of victim consultations, and in particular of studies like this, which are underpinned by the viewpoints of survivors. In concert with others, I similarly emphasize the importance of evidence-based transitional justice (Pham and Vinck 2007; van der Merwe et al. 2009), and therefore urge transitional justice scholars and practitioners to better engage in dialogues, for programs to be based on consultations, data and evidence, and for researcher to better communicate their findings.

In many ways, these different paradoxes illustrate what can be referred to as a tragic reality of transitional justice: the apparent insufficiency of generic post-conflict and transitional responses is frequently matched by a seeming impossibility of delivering individualized responses. Based on his personal experiences of several years of imprisonment in concentration camps during the Holocaust, Jean Améry in *At the Mind's Limit* (1980) observed that in the aftermath of mass atrocity "[...] justice could only be hypothetical anyway" (64). In light of these observations, caution is recommended with regard to expectations for transitional justice processes, as resolving these paradoxes and meeting these heightened expectations (Arbour 2007; Thoms, Ron and Paris 2010) proves intrinsically difficult.<sup>250</sup>

## 8.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how Acholi male survivors of sexual violence conceptualize justice, and how their views fit into and correspond with contemporary transitional justice developments in Northern Uganda. In combination with the previous chapter, this examination answers the primary research questions guiding

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<sup>250</sup> At the same time, however, meeting the diverse needs of victims may just be one goal of broader transitional justice processes, alongside the process of addressing the root causes of violence, conflict and inequalities, for instance.

this dissertation, while also addressing a prevailing lacuna in the literature on gender and transitional justice.

The analysis shows that Acholi male survivors' justice needs and conceptions are strongly centered around demands for government acknowledgement. Survivors articulated demands to have their silenced and neglected experiences officially acknowledged and legitimized by the institutional perpetrators. These viewpoints thus further accentuate the centrality of male survivors' sexual and gender harms being recognized (see Chapter 7.4.4; see also Haldemann 2009). Furthermore, material compensation and physical rehabilitation, as integral elements of reparations, can constitute important avenues for most male survivors to achieve harm-responsive and gender-sensitive justice. These two forms of reparations are expected to elevate male survivors (back) into a position where they are capable to work and provide for their families, as they are socially conditioned to as men within hegemonic masculinity constructions (Dolan 2002). Reparations are therefore seen as responding to the violations' impact on survivors' gender identities (see Chapter 6.6) in reparative and transformative ways (see Chapter 4.4.3).

At the same time, however, I have shown that the prospect for justice for male survivors in accordance with their priorities and responding to their needs remains elusive and improbable in the contemporary context. The government has not yet acknowledged any responsibility for most of the human rights violations perpetrated by the NRA in the north, let alone for crimes of sexual violence (against women and men). Further, criminal prosecutions on both the national and international level are characterized by numerous legal, judicial, political and societal barriers, many of which are heavily gendered. Because of these limitations and a resulting lack of trust in the Ugandan judiciary, criminal prosecutions were not seen as a viable option and thus not as a contemporary priority by the majority of male survivors who participated in this study. Uganda's draft transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014) proposes a comprehensive reparations framework, but it maintains striking gendered blind-spots and a lack of consideration for sexual violence (against women and men). These gaps, combined with the fact that the policy has yet to be passed and adopted, negatively affect the possibilities for male survivors to have their demands for reparations met.

In light of these gendered barriers and blind-spots of official and formalized transitional justice processes in Uganda, unofficial and non-institutionalized means, such as survivors' groups (Chapter 7), localized memorialization initiatives (Chapter 8.2.3) or non-state actors' rehabilitative provisions (Chapter 8.4.2) imply the potential to address male survivors' gendered harms and thus to achieve justice. To deliver harm-responsive and gender-sensitive justice for male survivors of sexual violence, in Northern Uganda as possibly elsewhere, transitional justice must thus be divorced from the constraints of institutionalism and legalism (see Chapter 9.1). In making these arguments, the study's micro-level findings carry wider mezzo-level utility with regards to gendered transitional justice debates more broadly, as concluded and summarized in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion - Gender Justice through a Masculinities Lens**

### **9.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this dissertation was to analyze how male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice, and to what extent and how transitional justice processes in this context address male sexual harms. Owing to the massive marginalization of conflict-related sexual violence against men across time and space (see Dolan 2014; Grey and Shepherd 2012), these specific intersections thus far remained remarkably under-explored. Integrating male survivors' empirically-grounded perspectives on justice into normatively-infused and under-theorized scholarly debates, this dissertation thus moves forward the frontiers of knowledge on justice in response to wartime sexual violence against men.

I have shown that in Northern Uganda, as elsewhere globally (see Chapter 4), formalized and institutionalized transitional justice processes are characterized by numerous gendered barriers and blindspots. In particular the masculine and heteronormative values underpinning these processes leave male sexual and gendered harms consistently un-accounted for. I argue that to zone into these gendered blind-spots and transcend these barriers, transitional justice needs to be emancipated from the bonds of its paradigmatic institutionalism. Within a vacuum of gender-sensitive redress, justice for male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda takes place on the micro-level, outside the purview of the state and formal institution that are characterized by hetero-patriarchal norms, and carried out by conflict affected-communities themselves.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to draw my main findings and arguments into one final analytical assessment, to answer the dissertation's research question and to contribute towards a gender-inclusive and harm-responsive understanding of transitional justice to remedy conflict-related sexual violence against men. To this end, in section 2, I summarize key findings and arguments in each of the chapters. Section 3 draws out the study's most important contributions and implications. This discussion is mapped across the two intersecting fields of inquiry this dissertation speaks to - gendered examinations of transitional justice, and conflict-related sexual

and gender-based violence against men - and structured in accordance with empirical and conceptual/theoretical contributions. I close this chapter by mapping out directions for future research, followed by concluding remarks. Although deriving from a micro-level examination, many of my arguments throughout this dissertation imply utility to post-conflict and transitional settings more broadly.

## **9.2. Overview of Key Findings and Arguments**

The Introduction Chapter evidenced numerous research gaps within the intersecting fields of transitional justice and studies of wartime sexual violence. In particular, Chapter One revealed that despite increasing recognition of sexual violence against men and growing attentiveness to gender-based violence by transitional justice processes, justice in response to male-directed sexual and gendered harms remains elusive. This particular lacuna in the literature constitutes the justification for this study, and the framework of analysis pursued throughout this dissertation. In Chapter 2, I offered critical methodological and ethical reflections, while continuously emphasizing the imperative dimensions of conducting participatory and emancipatory research *with* respondents, rather than *on* them, which provided the leitmotiv of this study.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that conflict-related sexual violence against men is perpetrated more frequently than popularly assumed (Sivakumaran 2007), therefore necessitating increased consideration and attention. Despite numerous important scholarly and political inroads into recognizing sexual violence against men in recent years, however, male survivors remain of marginal concern to scholarship on gender and armed conflict as well as policy alike (Grey and Shepherd 2012; Touquet and Gorris 2016). Chapter 3 evidenced that more empirically-guided research is needed to understand the complex phenomenon of wartime sexual violence against men, as well as male survivors' lived realities and their perspectives on a variety of post-conflict themes, including on justice. This assessment further forms the background of this study.

Chapter 4 set out the conceptual framework to guide the thesis' analysis, by theorizing the understanding of transitional justice as utilized in this dissertation through a masculinities lens. The chapter specifically evidenced a significant gap in the growing literature on gender justices which does not sufficiently engage with

masculinities (see Hamber 2015). One of the key findings in this Chapter is that transitional justice processes across time and space, including in Uganda, are inherently masculine. While transitional justice processes are thus often by, for and about men, the heteronormativity underpinning these processes (see Bueno-Hansen 2015) implies that male sexual and gendered harms fall outside these normative frames and thus remain unaccounted for. Another key finding of this chapter is that a broadened, widened (Nickson and Braithwaite 2014) and thickened (McEvoy 2007) understanding of transitional justice - moving beyond legalism and institutionalism but instead accommodative of diverse conceptions of justice and multiple mundane social, economic and political processes - implies the potential to address and circumvent these gendered blind-spots of institutionalized transitional justice processes.

However, transitional justice for men, in response to male gendered harms and through a masculinities lens, reveals potential gendered tensions and compromises. I argue that for many men impacted by conflict, justice can often depend on a restoration of and return to idealized, patriarchal and heteronormative gender orders and identities. Pursuing gender-inclusive justice through a masculinities lens and for conflict-affected men in particular is thus often linked to survivors' desire to restore gender orders that benefit some men over women and over subordinated men. This risks undoing prior advancements regarding gender parity and equality in transitional justice (Boesten 2014; Ní Aoláin 2012; O'Rourke 2016). These particular findings travel from the study's micro-level context to the mezzo- and macro-level, thus implying wider utility for gendered transitional processes (see below).

Proceeding from these methodological and theoretical premises, Chapter 5 mapped out the historical, social, cultural and political tapestry of the conflict in Northern Uganda, situating crimes of male-directed sexual violence within this context. Painting a detailed picture of the dynamics of sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, the chapter finds that these crimes were widespread, perpetrated by the Ugandan Government's National Resistance Army as an integral component of a strategic military campaign against the Acholi civilian population. While previous research (Dolan 2009; Esuruku 2011; JRP 2013; RLP 2014) shed important initial light on the occurrence of these crimes within this context, the findings

presented in this chapter facilitate the first systematic examination of male-directed sexual violence in Acholiland.

Building on these contextual premises, Chapter 6 unpacked and deconstructed the impact of sexual violence on Acholi male survivors' masculine identities, thereby answering the subsidiary research question of 'what are the gendered and sexual harms experienced by male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Northern Uganda?' (see Chapter 1.4). My findings show that in Northern Uganda, the impact of sexual violence on male survivors' masculinities is a process of gender subordination, initiated by acts of penetration and further exacerbated by a myriad of layered gendered harms. Deriving from new empirical data, my findings postulate that sexual violence is perceived to impact male survivors' masculinities in four fundamental ways: Firstly, in a heteronormative and patriarchal setting, acts of penetration symbolically 'turn men into women', which equals a perceived lower societal status (see Chapter 6.6.1). Secondly, male survivors are perceived as unable to protect themselves (and thus also their families) and are hence seen as failing in their key masculine roles as protector. Thirdly, due to the physical consequences of the violations, male survivors are often incapacitated to work and thus unable to provide for their families, as expected of them according to hegemonic masculinities constructions. Lastly, conditioned by the physiological implications of sexual violence, male survivors are often unable to achieve or sustain an erection and thus unable to procreate, which constitutes another central marker of manhood (see Chapter 6.6.2). While most previous studies conceptualize these effects in static terms and as one-time events (Alison 2007; Russell 2007; Solangon and Patel 2012), my findings instead suggest that the impact of sexual violence on male survivors' masculinities is an ambiguous and multi-layered process, thereby significantly advancing an understanding of male sexual violence survivors' lived realities and altering theorizing on wartime rape.

In Chapter 7, I switched the focus back to the question of justice in response to male-directed sexual violence in Northern Uganda. Seeking to understand how male survivors in Acholiland conceptualize justice, I analyzed survivors' support groups as a pathway through which justice can be achieved. The discussion in Chapter 7 thus constitutes the first step of answering the primary research question of how male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice. Empirically

building upon male survivors' perspectives, my primary finding in this chapter is that for the overwhelming majority of survivors who participated in this study, "justice means to be in a group with other survivors" (*Field notes, May 2015*). Analyzing these viewpoints, I find that survivors' groups create pathways through which justice for male survivors can be achieved in four fundamental ways: (1) by enabling survivors to re-negotiate their gender identities; (2) by mitigating isolation through the (re-)building of relationships; (3) by offering safe spaces for story-telling as a contribution to justice, enabling survivors to exercise agency; and (4) by initiating a process of recognition of male survivors' gendered harms. Further expanding the analysis, the findings presented in this Chapter show that survivors' groups constitute one piece within a wider puzzle of justice, from which further justice-related needs and priorities can emerge at the macro-level. In this reading, survivors' groups are one component of a wider process of justice.

In Chapter 8, I expanded upon this analysis, further foregrounding male survivors' diverse and individual perspectives on justice. This analysis thereby complements the previous chapter in answering the primary research question of how male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda conceptualize justice. I also investigated the responsiveness of Uganda's transitional justice landscape to crimes of male-directed sexual violence, thereby addressing the subsidiary research question of how prescribed transitional justice processes respond to male sexual and gendered harms. Deriving from male survivors' views, the findings presented in this Chapter identify three central themes as potential avenues of attaining justice, each characterized by a diversity of at times competing views: (1) official government acknowledgement; (2) criminal prosecutions; and (3) reparations, including a.) material compensation as well as b.) physical rehabilitation.

My findings show that most male survivors in Northern Uganda view government acknowledgement as an important component of justice. Given the political climate and the heteronormative societal ordering, however, male survivors realize the seeming impossibility of obtaining official acknowledgement of their harmful experiences by the regime which is responsible for the perpetration of these crimes, and which in 2017 continues to control political power. My findings furthermore reveal that the male survivors who participated in this study held ambivalent views regarding criminal prosecutions of government perpetrators. Some male survivors



generally favored prosecutions, although often not for retribution, but rather as means to obtain official government acknowledgement. At the same time, most survivors negatively perceived prosecutions, often recognizing the seeming improbabilities of holding government soldiers of the incumbent regime criminally accountable for crimes committed over 25 years ago. Survivors also recognized gendered political, cultural and legal constraints to holding the government judicially accountable. Lastly, my findings demonstrate that the majority of male survivors perceived reparations, and in particular material compensation and physical rehabilitation, to be important justice-related components. Reparations were viewed to assist with restoring their productive capacities and thus to re-enable survivors to provide for their families and allowing them to fulfill gendered expectations. At the same time, however, my findings reveal an opposing viewpoint, according to which reparations - in particular monetary - would equal the payment of dowry, locally conceptualized as *luk*. According to these isolated views, reparations if perceived as *luk* would officiate and legitimize the sexual violations perpetrated against them and would further manifest survivors' displacement from gendered personhood, thus entrenching further harm, rather than relieving suffering.

Overall, these findings accentuate the centrality of official acknowledgement and overall recognition for male survivors' conceptions of justice. Since male sexual harms and survivors' experiences continue to be marginalized, silenced and ignored within the socio-cultural context of Northern Uganda, leaving male survivors with no access to support structures and services, having their experiences officiated and recognized seems to constitute an imperative priority for the majority of participants in this study. Such views emphasize that acknowledgement and recognition often can be integral components of redress, as theorized throughout this dissertation (see Haldemann 2009; Honneth 1995; Ní Aoláin 2012).

### **9.3. Contributions to Knowledge**

Building on these key findings, in this section I map out the thesis' primary contributions to knowledge, speaking to the two intersecting fields of scholarship on transitional justice and gender as well as on conflict-related sexual violence, pertaining both empirical and theoretical/conceptual elements. In each of the

thematically structured sub-sections, I also draw out implications for these respective fields of scholarships vis-à-vis my findings, arguments and contributions .

### **9.3.1. Contributions to Scholarship on Transitional Justice and Gender**

I first emphasize the dissertation's contributions to scholarship on transitional justice through a gender lens, structured along empirical and conceptual/theoretical lines.

#### ***Empirical Contributions***

Empirically, the dissertation provides a detailed understanding of justice for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Northern Uganda. Based up original data deriving from richly textured field research, the dissertation answers the previously postulated research questions of how male sexual violence survivors conceptualize justice and to what extent and how transitional justice processes in Uganda respond to sexual violence against men. While a handful of previous studies conceptually and descriptively engaged with the nexus between transitional and sexual violence against men (see Chapter 1.3.4), this analysis constitutes the first ever empirically-guided examination of male survivors' perspectives on justice in Northern Uganda, underscoring the originality of the study. The dissertation's findings thus significantly advance our understanding of how to deliver justice for male sexual violence survivors in Northern Uganda, a sub-category of survivors usually situated at the peripheries of on-going justice debates.

One particular empirical contribution to gendered transitional justice scholarship includes the identification of a vacuum of gender-sensitive justice in response to sexual violence against men. This absence of harm-responsive transitional justice mechanisms for male sexual and gendered harms is not unique to this study's sample-population of survivors in support groups (see Chapter 2.4.2), but applies more widely to male survivors of sexual violence across Acholiland (see Schulz 2015; RLP 2013), and arguably extends to other post-conflict and transitional cases elsewhere globally. In Northern Uganda, the masculine and heteronormative character of official justice processes - coupled with the fact that these processes are state-driven and thus controlled by the perpetrating regime - result in numerous political, societal and gendered blind-spots with regard to gendered violations in general, and sexual violence against men in particular. These context-specific

dynamics in Northern Uganda are reflective of global developments in the hetero-patriarchal contexts of many conflict-affected and transitional settings internationally, as articulated in Chapter 4 (see Mannivanan 2014; Sivakumaran 2010; Dolan 2014), and my arguments thus carry wider implications and utility for transitional justice theorizing.

Within this vacuum of justice in response to sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda, male survivors' support groups can deliver a sense of justice for male sexual violence survivors (see Chapter 7.4). This assessment constitutes yet another key empirical contribution of this thesis to transitional justice research. Previous research on victims' groups in the transitional justice literature primarily focused on how groups enable survivors to interact with wider and externally-driven transitional justice processes (see Kesselring 2016; Rombouts 2004; MacDonald 2014). Thus far, however, survivors' groups have been only insufficiently analyzed as in themselves creating pathways through which justice can be attained, especially not through a masculinities lens and with a focus on conflict-related sexual violence against men. My analysis in Chapter 7 thus significantly contributes to an empirically-guided understanding of what 'justice' means for Acholi male survivors, and how to achieve justice in response to sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda within the absence of official means. Emphasizing the importance of everyday activities and micro-level processes within the context of redressing harms and attaining justice, this analysis offers novel empirical findings and immediately responds to the different research questions guiding this dissertation.

As summarized in the sub-chapter above, the analysis in Chapter 8 furthermore implies numerous empirical contributions as to how male survivors conceptualize justice and to what extent and how the transitional justice process in Northern Uganda respond to male survivors' harms. While existing research increasingly attends to justice in response to sexual violence against women (see Boesten 2014; Rubio-Marin 2009; Walker 2016), male survivors' viewpoints on diverse justice themes and measures remain largely unaccounted for, in Northern Uganda and indeed elsewhere globally. My findings thus constitute important empirical contributions to research on transitional justice and gender.

### ***Conceptual and Theoretical Contributions***

Conceptually and theoretically, this thesis contributes to a re-configured understanding of transitional justice through a masculinities lens and in response to male-directed sexual violence. As identified in Chapter 4 (and further evidenced in Chapters 7 and 8), there is a persistent gap in the ever-expanding literature on gendered transitional justice processes that does not yet sufficiently enough engage with masculinities (Hamber 2016). Situated within these broader epistemological gaps (see Chapter 4.5), masculine vulnerabilities and especially male sexual and gendered harms remain particularly unaddressed, constituting a prevailing conceptual shortcoming in the transitional justice literature. The examination in this dissertation contributes towards addressing this lacuna, by developing a conceptual understanding of justice in transition with specific attention to male survivors of sexual violence and through a masculinities lens.

I argue that a gender-inclusive and harm-responsive conceptualization of transitional justice, implying the potential to remedy conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence against women and men, needs to be thickened beyond the usual scope and frame of standardized transitional justice processes that are driven by prescriptive approaches and universalist assumptions. In particular, transitional justice needs to move beyond institutionalism in order to transcend the gendered, masculine and normative barriers of formalized processes that preclude a gender-inclusive and harm-responsive engagement with male sexual violations. The masculine and heteronormative character of formalized transitional justice measures marginalize harms and lived realities that fall outside these norms and frames, including sexual violence against men. Emancipating transitional justice from its constraints of institutionalism and instead recognizing diverse everyday processes carried out by conflict-affected communities on the micro-level, such as survivors' groups (see Chapter 7), can transcend the gendered exclusions of formalized measures. Such a broadened approach to transitional justice can cement real progress and justice for conflict-affected communities, including male survivors of sexual violence, in gender-inclusive and harm-responsive terms. While these dynamics are particularly visible in Acholiland, they are not unique to the specific context in Northern Uganda. The findings generated in this case-specific study thus carry wider mezzo-level

implications for transitional justice theory and practice with applicability across diverse transitional and post-conflict settings (see Chapter 4).

At the same time, the theoretical examination of transitional justice through a masculinities frame reveals numerous conceptual gendered tensions. In Chapter 4, I unpacked how justice for men and in response to male-directed sexual and gendered harms can often depend on a restoration of hetero-patriarchy, returning men into positions of privilege and power. This, in turn, can have negative implications and consequences for women's equality and gender parity in transitional justice, carrying with it the risk and danger of undoing some prior advancements regarding feminist projects of gender justice. Highlighting and foregrounding these gendered tensions of gendering transitional justice through a masculinities lens, which can be observed across multiple contexts, thus constitutes a conceptual and theoretical contribution of this dissertation, and carries wider mezzo- and macro-level implications for theorizing about justice in transition from a gender perspective. However, as argued above, divorcing transitional justice from its institutional domination implies the potential to transcend some of these gendered tensions and compromises embodied by formalized justice processes. If justice is conveyed on a micro-level, amongst survivors in participatory terms, many of these gendered tensions as described above surface less prominently and are not as strongly pronounced as they might be if justice was narrowly confined to institutional responses, which cannot take into account (gendered) micro-level dynamics to the same extent as informal processes can.

### ***Implications: Re-visiting Assumptions about Transitional Justice***

These diverse empirical and theoretical contributions carry important implications for the field of transitional justice. In particular, and as surveyed and identified in Chapter 4, transitional justice originated from and has been strongly dominated by legalistic and judicial approaches (Mallinder 2014). The findings in this dissertation complement a growing list of studies that challenge this legal pre-occupation of transitional justice (see Bell et al. 2007), and that instead advocate for a thicker (McEvoy 2008) and broader (Nickson and Braithwaite 2014) understanding of transitional justice which takes into account survivors' every-day needs and priorities (see Robins 2011; Kent 2012; Guthrey 2015; Gready and Robins 2014; Lambourne

2009). My findings and arguments throughout this dissertation show that justice often takes place on the micro-level, and for the male survivors who participated in this study specifically within the context of survivors' groups. Crucially, this analysis adds a masculinities lens and specific attention to male sexual harms to this growing body of post-conflict and social reconstruction scholarship (see Baines 2010; Das 2007).

These findings thereby also indicate a divergence and distinction between justice at the micro- and the macro-level (see Kanyangara et al. 2014). Within the context of this dissertation, the micro-level dimensions of justice refer to individual needs and priorities as well as processes carried out by war-affected populations themselves, often in participatory terms and on the local level (Baines 2010). The macro-level dimensions of justice are primarily situated at the national and societal level, driven by institutions and controlled by (often external) elite actors (Robins 2011). Echoing emerging findings in transitional justice scholarship (Guthrey 2015; Weinstein and Stover 2004; Robins 2011), my analysis shows that macro-level processes are often inaccessible for and irresponsible to conflict-affected communities' experiences and harms. Applying a masculinities lens reveals that these dynamics are particularly applicable to male survivors of sexual violence in Northern Uganda, whose lived realities are obstructed by the hetero-patriarchal frames of macro-level processes (see Chapter 4.5). Within this context, justice can be delivered and conveyed on the micro-level (see Chapter 7).

Closely linked to these distinctions, another important implication of this study for the field of transitional justice refers to the need to think more creatively outside the prevailing justice template (see Lundy and McGovern 2008) about what justice can look like for conflict-affected communities. For instance, recognizing survivors' groups as an important vehicle of conveying and facilitating justice is part of a larger strategy of creating "spaces for people to determine, shape and develop solutions for themselves" (*ibid*: 292). Echoing Sharp (2013), this can facilitate "a more holistic approach to the scope of justice issues addressed in transition" (152), interrogating the margins and peripheries of standardized, often technocratic and prescribed, transitional justice approaches.

At the same time, my findings in Chapter 8 demonstrate the individuality and context-specificity of survivors' understandings of justice and their post-conflict

needs. Despite growing awareness regarding the co-existence of diverging perspectives and priorities among conflict-affected communities (Vinck, Pham, et al. 2007), nevertheless, most frequently, gross generalizations are made about how to deliver justice for entire populaces (Stover and Weinstein 2004). However, justice-related needs and perspectives are essentially products of culture, cosmology and sociality within each local context, and are therefore highly local in nature (Baines 2007; Porter 2013), and cannot easily be transferred to other conflicts or even generalized within cases (Merry 2006). Albeit deriving from the specific context of this study, this understanding carries important implications for transitional justice theorizing and implementation, emphasizing the need for survivors' voices and perspectives to be heard and integrated, advocating for victim-centric approaches (Robins 2011) and underscoring the local contingencies of justice needs.

### **9.3.2. Contributions to Scholarship on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**

In addition to the thesis' primary analysis of justice in response to male-directed sexual violence, the research likewise carries numerous empirical and conceptual contributions to scholarship on gender and armed conflict in general, and conflict-related sexual violence in particular. These thematic contributions are discussed in their empirical and conceptual/theoretical dimensions throughout this section.

#### ***Empirical Contributions***

Empirically, the study provides a detailed and empirically deconstructed understanding of how sexual violence in Northern Uganda impacts on male survivors' masculine identities in a myriad of ways. While scholarship on conflict-related sexual violence against men remains largely descriptive and lacks empirical insights (see Chapter 3), the data underpinning this study offer important contributions. Previous studies claim that conflict-related sexual violence against men compromises and thwarts male survivors' masculinities, commonly conceptualized as 'emasculatation' (see Lewis 2014; Sivakumaran 2007). Precisely how these complex processes unfold from survivors' phenomenological perspectives, however, remains only insufficiently explored. This constitutes a significant lacuna in the literature, that the examination in Chapter 6 addressed. While most existing studies approach the compromising of masculinities in static terms and almost exclusively linked to physical sexual violations (and primarily penetrative rape), my

analysis instead shows that the impact of sexual violence on male survivors' gender identities is characterized as a longitudinal process, rather than a one-time event, that unfolds via numerous physical, psychological and physiological harms. This examination both challenges and complements conventional understandings of wartime rape, offering an important empirical contribution to the growing literature in this sub-field (see Chapter 3).

Meanwhile, the analysis in Chapter 5 offers a detailed and empirically-guided exploration of the dynamics of sexual violence against men during the conflict in Acholiland. Even though Dolan (2014), the Refugee Law Project (RLP 2014a) and a few other sources (see Finnström 2009; Esuruku 2011; JRP 2013) brought much needed attention to the occurrence of *tek-gungu* in Acholiland, thus far no holistic and systematic examination of these violations exists in the literature. The detailed analysis in Chapter 5 hence constitutes an important and novel empirical contribution to the wealth of existing scholarship on Northern Uganda, shedding important light on a previously under-acknowledged and under-researched aspect of the conflict. Lastly, the analysis in Chapter 6 likewise offers thick empirical descriptions of contextual masculinities constructions in Northern Uganda, thereby complementing prior research (see Dolan 2002, 2009; Oyango 2012; Esuruku 2012; El-Bushra and Sahl 2005). These findings offer empirical insights into gender identities, relations and hierarchies within this local context (see Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin 2014; Porter 2013).

### ***Conceptual and Theoretical Contributions***

In conceptual and theoretical terms, the application and further development of the concept of 'displacement from gendered personhood' (see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016) to account for the effects of sexual violence on male survivors' gender identities constitutes an important theoretical contribution (see Chapter 6.5). Building on Edström, Dolan et al. (2016), my application of the concept further unpacked, developed, and advanced this theoretical frame.

Contrary to dominant theorizing on the impact of sexual violence against men, which primarily conceptualizes these dynamics as 'emasculatation' (see Lewis 2014; Meger 2015; Solangon and Patel 2012) by way of 'feminization' and 'homo-sexualization' (see Sivakumaran 2005), the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 6 implies



the potential to account for male survivors' lived realities of gendered and sexual harms in more inclusive and dynamic capacities, thereby doing justice to the fluid and highly complex nature of these processes. While the concept and associated terminology of 'emasculation' primarily assume that male sexual violence survivors virtually lose their masculine identities, the frame of 'displacement from gendered personhood' accounts for the fluid character of male survivors' experiences, without freezing dynamic experiences into time and space (see Chapter 6.5). This conceptual framework likewise acknowledges the potential temporality of the impact of sexual violence on survivors' masculinities, which is reflective of survivors' long-term lived realities, as evidenced by the data underpinning this examination (see Chapter 6.6). Further, the frame engages with and responds to feminist critique regarding the conceptions and linguistics of 'emasculation' and 'feminization', as explained more fully in Chapter 6.5, thereby theorizing about the impact of conflict on gender in more inclusive and less paternalistic and patronizing ways (see Chapter 6.5). By utilizing and developing this conceptual frame, I therefore analyze sexual violence in more complex terms, which "can strengthen theories of wartime sexual violence" (Sjoberg 2016: 43).

Although my utilization and further scrutinizing of the concept in this thesis is applied to a specific local context, it nevertheless can be applied more broadly and surely resonates across other settings, thus carrying important mezzo-level contributions to scholarship on the gendered dimensions of war in general, and conflict-related sexual violence in particular. The development of this framework therefore constitutes a significant theoretical contribution, implying the potential to alter theorizing on conflict-related sexual violence.

### ***Implications: Re-visiting Assumptions about Gender, Armed Conflict and Sexual Violence***

These diverse empirical and theoretical contributions carry important implications for research on gender and armed conflict in general, and for the literature on conflict-related sexual violence in particular. In this sub-section, I juxtapose dominant assumptions inherent to this body of scholarship against the findings and arguments presented in this thesis, thereby foregrounding the dissertation's implications for this research field.

As identified in the Introduction, dominant research on gender and armed conflict (see Cockburn 1989; Enloe 2004; Sjoberg 2013; Goldstein 2001) only slowly and marginally examines the roles and positioning of masculinities during theaters of war. Throughout this growing body of literature, only insufficient attention is paid to men's conflict-related experiences as explicitly gendered (Hamber 2016; Dolan 2015; Theidon 2007; Carpenter 2003). When masculinities perspectives are employed - which has increasingly become the case (Cahn and Ní Aoláin 2009; Myrtilinen et al. 2016) - the focus of these studies predominantly rests on hyper- and militarized masculinities and their conceptual linkages with violence (see Chapter 3.2), at the expense of other, alternative and subordinated conceptions of manhood (Wright 2014). Such misleading portrayals frequently omit attention to male vulnerabilities and men and boys as victims in armed conflicts (Turner 2017; Dolan 2015).<sup>251</sup> By examining male sexual violence survivors' gendered and sexual harms and vulnerabilities, I thus contribute to an ongoing process of breaking with this dominant tradition, carrying implications for the field.

As identified in Chapter 3, another dominant assumption views male-directed sexual violence to be a peripheral phenomenon, and an exception to the norm (see Gabriel 2004; de Brouwer 2005). As a result, male survivors frequently remain of marginal concern throughout most dominant scholarship on sexual violence (see Grey and Shepherd 2012). By demonstrating that sexual violence against men is perpetrated more frequently than commonly assumed (Sivakumaran 2007), in Northern Uganda (Chapter 5) and various other contexts (Chapter 3), my research thus carries implications for scholarship on gender and armed conflict, and particularly for the growing research field on conflict-related sexual violence. The empirical deconstruction of male survivors' harms and the theoretical development of the framework of 'displacement from gendered personhood', as reviewed above, likewise forces us to re-visit dominant assumptions about conflict-related sexual violence against men.

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<sup>251</sup> As elaborated in Chapter 1, this unreconstructed view similarly portrays women as ever-vulnerable and in need of external (white) and masculine protection (Otto 2009), thus distracting from women's wartime agency (Amony 2015; Baines 2016; Utas 2005).

## **9.4. Limitations of the Study**

While this study thus implies numerous important empirical and theoretical contributions towards intersecting fields of scholarship and addresses persistent lacunas in the literature, my arguments and findings are nevertheless characterized by certain limitations.

Firstly, the data underpinning this study derive from a single-case study, and in particular from a very specific group of survivors who are members of support groups and who have suffered a specific form of sexual violence more than two decades ago. This specificity of the micro-level character of the study and its participants implies potential limitations regarding the generalizability and wider utility of all my findings, which may not necessarily apply to survivors outside the context of groups, or who have suffered different sexual and gendered violations, possibly in another socio-cultural and geographical context. At the same time, however, despite these limitations, numerous findings, arguments and contributions generated by the thesis nevertheless travel more broadly and carry wider implications (see Chapter 9.3). To this end, more research in different settings and with different groups of survivors is required to further verify my arguments (see Chapter 9.5).

Secondly, this analysis in many ways represents a temporal snapshot of survivors' views on justice at a particular point in time. Perceptions and conceptions of justice, however, are rarely ever static, and potentially develop and evolve (see Chapters 4; Robins 2011; Porter 2013). If over time, some of the survivors' demands may be met, or if Uganda would experience a transitional regime change, survivors' views, priorities and needs may well be expected to change, thus warranting further timely research. For instance, once survivors' demands for recognition and acknowledgement may have been addressed, prosecutions for retributive means and with the aim to hold perpetrators criminally accountable may feasibly emerge as a more prioritized justice needs.

## **9.5 Directions for Further Research**

In part emerging from these limitations, there are numerous research gaps and lacunas within the intersecting bodies of literature on transitional justice and conflict-related sexual violence which remain unaddressed and thus warrant further study.

Since the nexus between transitional justice and male-directed sexual violence is consistently under-researched, with barely a handful of studies to date, and the literature on conflict-related sexual violence against men remains under-theorized and lacks empirical data (see Chapter 3), there is a wealth of potential for further qualitative and quantitative research. As uncovered throughout this dissertation, especially explanations for the occurrence of male-directed sexual violence in conflict zones are under-theorized (see Chapter 3.5), and male survivors' lived realities and experiences remain only marginally explored, thus necessitating further research. Quantitative studies can offer unique insights into the scope and prevalence of male-directed sexual violence across time and space, while qualitative studies can further advance our understanding regarding male survivors' experiences, including with regards to post-conflict justice and reconstruction. Comparative and cross-national studies in particular imply the potential to holistically uncover trends and similarities but also disparities regarding the dynamics of wartime sexual violence against men. Despite this generic need for further research, however, three specific themes stand out, which I highlight in separate sections below.

### ***Diversification of Respondents and Cases***

As previously acknowledged, this study builds upon the experiences and perspectives of a relatively small and specific sample, namely 46 male survivors of sexual violence who are members of (semi-)institutionalized survivors' groups in Northern Uganda. Some of my findings thus imply only limited utility and primarily apply at the micro-level of the specific context of this dissertation (see above). To further verify my findings and arguments about transitional justice in response to sexual violence against men, however, further research is needed, both context-specifically in Northern Uganda and elsewhere. In Northern Uganda, research with male survivors who are not affiliated with survivors' groups could add further insights, although potentially implying numerous ethical challenges, which I sought to circumvent (see Chapter 2). At the same time, research with survivors as members of associations in other cases and across localities implies the potential to extend and apply my assessment of survivors' groups in relation to justice beyond the specific case of Northern Uganda.

### ***Transitional Justice Margins and Peripheries***

My examination of survivors' groups as a pathway through which justice can be achieved (see Chapter 7) has evidenced that transitional justice can often be situated on the margins and peripheries of such processes (see Sharp 2013).<sup>252</sup> A more systematic scholarly examination of transitional justice from the margins or within the peripheries of standardized and institutionalized processes implies the potential to paint a more comprehensive picture of the scope of justice in times of transition (*ibid.*: 152), and thereby a more accurate reflection of the lived realities of survivors in (post-)conflict contexts around the world (see Porter 2013). Such an analysis must concentrate on those instruments, means and mechanisms conventionally positioned outside, or on the margins, of the prevailing transitional justice framework. At the same time, an interrogation of transitional justice peripheries must centralize the voices, concerns and priorities of protagonists from the margins, which within the practice of transitional justice often refers to survivors' communities on the local level (Shaw and Waldorf 2010). Crucially, an embrace of the local and of transitional justice margins implies the potential to construct evidence and knowledge from the bottom up, following an ontology from below (Robins 2011), and can thus contribute towards challenging contemporary technocratic and prescribed transitional justice approaches (see Lundy and McGovern 2008).

### ***Political Agency of Male Sexual Violence Survivors***

Existing research thus far primarily examines conflict-related sexual violence against men through the frame of vulnerabilities, portraying male survivors as passive, humiliated and stripped of their gendered identities (see Meger 2015; Lewis 2009; Sivakumaran 2007). By foregrounding Acholi male survivors' gendered and sexual harms (see Chapter 6), this dissertation similarly taps into this approach of examining the numerous gendered vulnerabilities and harms resulting from male-directed sexual violence. Arguably, such a focus and approach is warranted, since male survivors' experiences of harm remain strikingly under-researched (see Chapter 3; Dolan 2014). However, how male sexual violence survivors exercise agency in spite of these gendered vulnerabilities has not yet been explored. Examining how male survivors

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<sup>252</sup> Co-edited by Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Eilish Rooney, the International Journal of Transitional Justice has a forthcoming special issue in 2018 on 'Transitional Justice from the Margins: Intersections of Identities, Power and Human Rights.'

exercise agency in a myriad of inter-twined ways thus constitutes a poignant avenue for further research. Future studies should similarly seek to explore the underlying gendered societal and cultural factors as well as political conditions that influence as well as enable and disable different forms of agency.<sup>253</sup>

Previous research has utilized such a focus on agency for women's experiences of war (see Baines 2016; Utas 2005). Guided by feminist curiosity (see Enloe 2004) and in an attempt to "collapse the often gendered opposition of agency and victimhood that typically characterizes the analysis of women's coping strategies in war zones" (Utas 2005: 403), various studies have acknowledged that women in armed groups and female sexual violence survivors are not only passive, vulnerable subjects in need of external protection, and have turned towards examining the numerous ways in which women exercise agency (Baines 2016; Coulter 2009). Specifically focusing on Northern Uganda, the autobiographic account of Evelyn Amony (2015), who spent more than ten years with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), contributes to a more nuanced and detailed understanding of women in conflict and post-conflict settings, "thereby re-painting the picture of women in the LRA as not just vulnerable and passive victims but also empowered agents and actors" (Schulz 2016; also see Baines 2015, 2017).

In combination, these studies challenge essentialist and simplified portrayals of female gendered victimhood in situations of armed conflict, evidencing that survivors instead frequently exercise agency in an attempt to come to terms with their harmful experiences. Despite this much needed attention to the agency of female survivors, however, the manifold ways in which male survivors of sexual violence exercise agency has not yet been examined, neither in Northern Uganda nor elsewhere, thus constituting a significant research gap. By analyzing how Acholi male survivors exercise agency in survivors' support groups and how this links to transitional justice, the examination in Chapter 7 already initiated such a move

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<sup>253</sup> In this context, I broadly understand agency as "the actions [or non-actions], words or gestures that contest one's status as person or non-person within the web of human relationships" (and Häkli and Kallio (2013: 182). Following Baines (2017), "political agency is defined by one's ability to improvise social action to remake the self in relation to others, to push back against violent acts and to reconfigure new life" (14). Similarly, Häkli and Kallio situate political agency in "the social world that the embodied individual encounters in multiple different subject positions, averting, accepting and altering them through individual and concerted action" (2013: 191).

towards exploring male survivors' agency, although more systematic research in this direction is needed (also see Edström, Dolan et al. 2016; Dolan, Edström et al. 2017).

## **9.6. Concluding Remarks**

Inevitably, a doctoral dissertation research project, bound by scope, time and financial constraints, can constitute only an initial investigation of a particular question (see Swaine 2011). Clearly, more research and careful inquiries are needed to further uncover the manifold ways in which conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is targeted against men, how such violence impacts upon male victims, and how survivors seek to achieve justice in response to their harms. As problematized in Chapter 3, many existing studies on sexual violence against men remain largely descriptive, under-theorized and characterized by a lack of empirically-grounded survivors' perspectives. Likewise, despite increasing attention to victims' participation (Lundy and McGovern 2008; UN 2014), transitional justice processes and scholarship remain characterized by the absence of survivors' voices, viewpoints and priorities (Robins 2011), resulting in a dearth of evidence-based transitional justice (van der Merwe et al. 2009).

Having privileged and analyzed Acholi male survivors' experiences and viewpoints on transitional justice throughout this dissertation, I have sought to depart from this dominant trend of marginalizing survivors' empirical perspectives, which characterizes existing scholarship on these topics. I therefore position my thesis as an empirically-driven counter to the largely descriptive and normatively-infused bodies of literature on transitional justice and on conflict-related sexual violence, seeking to make numerous important scholarly inroads into under-explored intersections and themes.

### ***Methodological and Ethical Reflections***

Explicitly foregrounding male survivors' experiences and views led me to re-visit and re-shape dominant assumptions inherent to research on transitional justice, gender and sexual violence (see Chapter 9.3). For instance, my assessment of survivors' groups as a pathway through which justice can be conveyed (see Chapter 7) is an immediate outcome of male survivors' views articulated during the workshops, and would most likely not have surfaced if interviews had been solely

conducted with external service-providers and so-called (often self-proclaimed) experts. Moreover, if done properly and in an ethically sensitive manner (Chapter 2), the research process can also constitute an emancipatory and empowering exercise for survivors themselves. Various survivors who participated in this study repeatedly emphasized that "it is good that we are now speaking" (*Workshop 1*) and that "talking has really helped, and it was important to get this out" (*Workshop 3*).

However, one persistent problem that I, as well as others (see Wolfe 2017; Wood 2013), have repeatedly observed is that a significant number of studies on conflict-related sexual violence (against women and men) seem to negate the ethical imperatives and the implications of research for survivors. Various researchers and studies frequently do not (and perhaps often cannot) involve research participants into the research process as equal protagonists. As a result of this, ethical sensitivity and integrity often seem to fall by the wayside, and interventionist and exploitative methodologies prevail. The implications of such approaches towards the survivors who are subjected to research, and to the organization(s) that work tirelessly to establish safe spaces, are severe and stand in contrast to the self-centric and egoistic gains for intervening researchers. Having situated my research project as part of RLP's continuous and sustainable process of engagement with male survivors who are members of institutionalized survivors' groups, I have actively and purposefully sought to address and engage with these very real challenges. Nonetheless, despite my tireless efforts of trying to facilitate an ethically sensitive and empowering environment, I likely cannot entirely free myself from any blame of externally intervening (see Chapter 2). However, I raise an important aspect of imperative significance: that ethical considerations must be centralized and prioritized during research with (potentially) vulnerable populations in (post-)conflict and transitional settings, as I have sought to do within the context of this study.

### ***Final Considerations***

In addition to these methodological-ethical considerations, I conclude by foregrounding the most important implications of this dissertation with regard to transitional justice in response to sexual violence against men and through a masculinities lens. These implications travel from the specific context of this dissertation to the mezzo- and macro-level.



In concert with others (see Baines 2010; Kent 2012; Stover and Weinstein 2004), Robins (2011) observed that "transitional justice processes are driven by a global rights discourse that is abstracted from [the] local context and whose universalism necessarily reduces its relevance to the everyday lives of those most impacted by violations" (300). Such is certainly the case in Northern Uganda, and particularly for Acholi male survivors of sexual violence. Globalized, elite-controlled and state-centric transitional justice processes - such as the externally-driven intervention by the ICC in Northern Uganda (Apuuli 2004) or the country's government-led draft national transitional justice policy (JLOS 2014) - constitute integral elements of such a global practice (Teitel 2015), but have little impact on and responsiveness for survivors, including their harms and experiences. As further noted by Robins (2011),

for approaches to post-conflict contexts to be relevant to victims, a novel approach is required that renegotiates agency in the addressing of the impact of violent pasts, replacing mimetic models imported from remote contexts with action [...] rooted in the everyday lives of the conflict-affected (301).

This resonates with my findings from Northern Uganda, and I therefore extend these insights to the specific gendered context of sexual and gender-based violence against men. In Acholiland, situated in a vacuum of gender-inclusive and harm-reactive justice in response to sexual violence against men, male survivors attain a sense of justice on the micro-level and on their own terms, through participation in survivors' groups (see Chapter 7). The groups immediately respond to male survivors' gendered and sexual harms in a capacity that mimetic and prescriptive processes often cannot, fostering agency and thereby conveying a sense of justice. While through survivors' engagement within the groups, additional justice-related needs at the macro-level emerge, including requests for government acknowledgement and reparation (see Chapter 8), the prospects for survivors to have their demands met in the contemporary context appears highly unlikely, conditioned by gendered political, legal and societal factors.

Indeed, institutionalized transitional justice mechanisms are frequently bound by numerous political, societal and cultural constraints, many of which are gendered, producing gender-specific blind-spots and leaving male sexual harms particularly unaddressed (see Chapter 4.5). Due to the masculine and heteronormative character of many justice conceptions and processes, sexual violence against men falls into

these gaps and thus remains largely unaccounted for, in Northern Uganda, as elsewhere globally. To transcend these gendered barriers and limitations, the field of transitional justice needs to be emancipated from the bonds of institutionalism and pushed out of its current liberal rights-based approach. Transitional justice needs to move beyond universalist approaches and assumptions, to include a myriad of non-institutionalized and non-formalized means, composed of everyday processes, situated on the micro-level and driven in a participatory approach by conflict-affected communities themselves. This approach suggests the need to imaginatively think outside the standardized transitional justice box, instead considering autonomously driven processes that can address survivors' needs and facilitate agency, outside the purview of masculine and heteronormative institutions. Such an understanding and re-conceptualization of transitional justice can contribute towards gender-sensitive and harm-responsive justice through a masculinities lens for male survivors of wartime sexual violence.

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## **Appendix I: Informed Consent Form (Workshop Discussions; English Version)**

### **Informed Consent Form for Participants in the Study: “Transitional Justice and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Men”**

**Name of Research:** Philipp Schulz

**Name of Research Assistant:** Kenneth Oyet Odong

1.) I confirm that I have been given, have read and have understood an information sheet about this study.

Initials:

2.) I confirm that I have been able to ask questions about the study, and that my questions have been sufficiently answered.

Initials:

3.) I understood that I do not need to participate in this study, and that I have the right to either decline participation, leave the workshop, or withdraw my participation at any point after the workshop, until the findings have been published / the dissertation has been submitted (expected in October 2017).

Initials:

4.) I understand that the researcher will store any information or interview results safely and treat them as confidential (except as may be required by the law).

Initials:

5.) I understand and agree that the researcher will not take note of my name, age, gender, location or the location of the workshop.

Initials:

6.) I understand and agree that the workshop will be not be audio-taped, but that handwritten notes will be taken, and that a research assistant/interpreter will be present at the workshop.

7.) I agree to take part in this study.

Date:

Full Name, assigned number and Signature:

#### **Contact details for the Researcher:**

Philipp Schulz: 0044-7519051861 (UK): / + 256-774918519 (UG); [Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk](mailto:Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk); Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), Ulster University, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland, UK, BT39 0QB; Tel.: 0044-2890 366202; [www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk); [transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk)

## **Appendix II: Informed Consent Form (Individual Interviews; English Version)**

### **Informed Consent Form for Participants in the Study: “Transitional Justice and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Males”**

**Name of Research:** Philipp Schulz

**Name of Research Assistant:** TBC

- 1.) I confirm that I have been given, have read and have understood an information sheet about this study.
- 2.) I confirm that I have been able to ask questions about the study, and that my questions have been sufficiently answered.
- 3.) I understood that I do not need to participate in this study, and that I have the right to either decline participation, pause the interview, stop the interview, or withdraw my participation at any point after the interview, until the findings have been published / the dissertation has been submitted.
- 4.) I understand that the researcher will store any information or interview results safely and treat them as confidential (except as may be required by the law).
- 5.) I understand and agree that the researcher will take note of my name and my organizational affiliation.
- 6.) I understand and agree that the interview will be audio-taped.
- 7.) I agree to take part in this study.

Date:

Full Name:

Signature:

#### **Contact details for the Researcher:**

Philipp Schulz: 0044-7519051861 (UK): / + 256-774918519 (UG); [Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk](mailto:Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk)

Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), Ulster University, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland, UK, BT39 0QB; Tel.: 0044-2890 366202; [www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk); [transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk)

## **Appendix III: Information Sheet (Workshop Discussions; English Version)**

### **Information Sheet for Participants in the Study: “Transitional Justice and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Males”**

**Name of Researcher:** Philipp Schulz

**Name of Research Assistant:** Kenneth Oyet Odong

#### **What is this study about?**

This study wants to find out what is needed to achieve justice for male victims of conflict-related sexual violence. The study aims to understand the perspectives of male victims of sexual violence on justice, and to produce knowledge on transitional justice for male victims of sexual violence.

The Victims' Group that you are a member of and the Refugee Law Project (RLP) agreed to take part in this project, and think that you would be interested in participating in the study. If you are interested in participating, we would invite you to take part in a workshop with other members of the victims group. The workshop will be organized by the Refugee Law Project and the researcher. However, this does not mean that you have to take part. If you do not want to participate, we will not invite you for the workshop and we will not record your name, your details, your location, nor the fact that you do not wish to participate.

If you do wish to participate, we will ask you to read and sign another document, confirming that you agree to participate and on what terms (*informed consent form*). If you do not wish to sign the document, you will have the opportunity to verbally confirm that you want to participate and on what terms. You will be able to keep a copy of this sheet, which will include detailed contact information of the researcher and the institutions. If you change your mind about your participation or have any questions later, you can contact us at any point in time.

If you choose to participate, we will **not** record your name, age, personal details, your address and the location of the workshop. Instead, all participants for the workshops will be numbered, so that we can withdraw your information later on, if requested. We will **not** audio-tape the workshop, but if you agree, we would take handwritten notes. During the workshop, you will have the opportunity to leave the workshop at any time, either for a certain time period or all together. After the workshop, you will have the opportunity to withdraw either specific or all information, and you will be able to withdraw your participation completely up to any point until the information have been published or the thesis has been submitted (expected in October 2017). If you agree to participate, your data will be kept anonymous and confidential on a password-secured server.

#### **What is this for?**

This is an academic study as part of a PhD program at the Transitional Justice Institute (TJI) at Ulster University in Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom (UK). The study in Uganda is carried out in cooperation with the Refugee Law Project (RLP) based in Kampala, Uganda. The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee at Ulster University, as well as by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology.

### **What will I have to do?**

If you agree to participate, we would like to invite you for a workshop with other members of the victims group that you are part of. For the workshop, participants will be asked to discuss their opinions regarding transitional justice. The workshops will last between two to four hours, with sufficient breaks in between. During the workshops, I will be joined by my colleague(s) who will help me with translations and by staff of the Refugee Law Project (RLP) who is a counsellor and/or mental health professional. If at any stage of the workshop or group discussion you feel uncomfortable or have any concerns, you can either talk to me or my colleagues. The information from the workshops will only be used for the academic study, and not for any other purposes.

### **Contact Details**

If at any point after the workshop you should have any questions, you can either contact me directly, my institution or colleagues at the Refugee Law Project in Uganda:

#### **Contact details for the Researcher:**

Philipp Schulz: + 256-774918519 (UG) / 0044-7519051861 (UK); [Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk](mailto:Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Professor Fionnuala Ni Aolain, Professor of Law and Associate Director, Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), Ulster University: +1 612 624 2318; [niaol002@umn.edu](mailto:niaol002@umn.edu)

*Contact details for my institutions*

Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), Ulster University, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland, UK, BT39 0QB; Tel.: 0044-2890 366202; [www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk); [transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk)

Refugee Law Project, School of Law, Makerere University, Plot 7 & 9 Perryman Gardens, Old Kampala; +256 (0) 414 343 556; [info@refugeelawproject.org](mailto:info@refugeelawproject.org)

## **Appendix IV: Information Sheet (Individual Interviews; English Version)**

### **Information Sheet for Participants in the Study: “Transitional Justice and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Males”**

*(for individual in-depth interviews in Northern Uganda)*

**Name of Researcher:** Philipp Schulz

**Name of Research Assistant:** Kenneth Oyet Odong

#### **What is this study about?**

This study aims to understand what is needed to achieve justice for male victims of conflict-related sexual violence. The study will explore the perspectives of male victims of sexual violence on justice, and aims to produce knowledge about transitional justice for male victims of sexual violence. For the study, I am carrying out research in Northern Uganda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Northern Ireland.

Therefore, I would like to interview you about your viewpoints on legal protection and transitional justice in relation to conflict-related sexual violence against men. I am **not** going to ask you any questions about potentially sensitive information, such as for example identities of victims or perpetrators, or locations of crimes. The interviews will last between 45 and 90 minutes.

#### **What do I have to do?**

If you do not want to participate, I will not interview you and I will not record your name, your details and your location, nor the fact that you do not wish to participate.

If you do wish to participate, I will ask you to read and sign another document confirming that you agree to participate and on what terms (*informed consent form*). If you do not wish to sign the piece of paper, you can also verbally confirm that you have understood this information and what specific terms you agree to. You will receive a copy of this sheet, which will include detailed contact information of the researcher and the institution, and if you change your mind about your participation or have any questions later on, you can contact me or my institution at any point in time.

Also, if you choose to participate, I would like to note down the name of the organisation/institution you are working with. If you agree, I would also like to take your name. If you do not want me to take your name or your organisation's name, however, I will **not** take any of the information and the interview will be made anonymous. I will **not** record your age, your address and the location of the interview. If you agree, I would like to audio-tape the interview. However, if you do not want me audio-tape the interview, I would like to take handwritten notes, if you agree.

During the interview, you will be able to pause or quit the interview at any point. After the interview, you will be able to withdraw either specific parts or all information, and you will be able to withdraw your participation all together up to any point until the data have been published or the thesis has been submitted (submission expected in October 2017).

#### **What is this for?**

This is an academic study as part of a PhD program at the Transitional Justice Institute (TJI) at Ulster University in Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom (UK). The study in Uganda



is carried out in cooperation with the Refugee Law Project (RLP) based in Kampala, Uganda.

The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee at Ulster University, as well as by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology.

### **Contact Details**

If at any point after the interview you should have any questions, you can either contact me directly, my institution or colleagues at the Refugee Law Project in Uganda:

#### **Contact details for the Researcher:**

Philipp Schulz: + 256-774918519 (UG) / 0044-7519051861 (UK): [Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk](mailto:Schulz-P@email.ulster.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Professor Fionnuala Ni Aolain, Professor of Law and Associate Director, Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), Ulster University: +1 612 624 2318; [niaol002@umn.edu](mailto:niaol002@umn.edu)

*Contact details for my institutions:*

Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), Ulster University, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland, UK, BT39 0QB; Tel.: 0044-2890 366202; [www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.transitionaljustice.ulster.ac.uk); [transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:transitionaljustice@ulster.ac.uk)

Refugee Law Project, School of Law, Makerere University, Plot 7 & 9 Perryman Gardens, Old Kampala; +256 (0) 414 343 556; [info@refugeelawproject.org](mailto:info@refugeelawproject.org)

## Appendix V: Code-Book

Node / Sub-Node	Description
<b>JUSTICE</b>	Respondents views on justice in a broadened and thickened conceptualization of the term
<b>Justice / Prosecutions</b>	Respondents views on and perceptions of prosecutions, including criminal trials on the national and international level; including limitations of trial proceedings
<b>Justice / Acknowledgement</b>	Respondents views on and perceptions of official government acknowledgement; including local translations; challenges and prospects of obtaining acknowledgement for crimes of sexual violence against men; ways for acknowledgement to be delivered
<b>Justice / Recognition</b>	Respondents views on recognition in relation to justice; including the importance of recognition; ways for recognition to be delivered; how survivors' groups can deliver recognition
<b>Justice / Reparations</b>	Respondents views on reparations; including forms of reparations; prospects to obtain reparations
<b>Justice / Material Compensation</b>	Respondents views specifically on material compensation as a form of reparations
<b>Justice / Physical Rehabilitation</b>	Respondents views specifically on physical rehabilitation as a form of reparations
<b>Justice / Survivors' Groups</b>	Respondents views on how survivors' groups constitute and contribute to justice; including how survivors' groups deliver recognition
<b>Justice / Experience with Justice Processes</b>	Respondents prior experiences of engaging with (external) justice processes in Uganda and internationally
<b>SURVIVORS' GROUPS</b>	Information about support groups of male sexual violence survivors in Uganda and Northern Uganda
<b>Survivors' Groups / Background</b>	Background information about support groups of male sexual violence survivors
<b>Survivors' Groups / Activities</b>	Activities of support groups of male sexual violence survivors
<b>Survivors' Groups / Challenges</b>	Challenges of support groups of male sexual violence survivors
<b>Survivors' Groups / Justice</b>	Respondents views on how survivors' groups constitute and contribute to justice; including how survivors' groups deliver recognition
<b>Survivors' Groups / Relation with RLP</b>	Groups' and members' relationship(s) with the Refugee Law Project; including their relations with other NGOs

<b>GENDER</b>	Gender constructions in Northern Uganda, including femininities and masculinities and relational aspects
<b>Gender</b> / Masculinities	Defining elements and components and expectations of masculinities constructions in Acholiland / Northern Uganda
<b>Gender</b> / Femininities	Defining elements and components and expectations of femininities constructions in Acholiland / Northern Uganda
<b>Gender</b> / Personhood	Constructions of personhood in Northern Uganda, as tied to gender
<b>CONFLICT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (SV)</b>	Contextual background information about the conflict in Northern Uganda and about crimes of sexual violence (against women and men) perpetrated within this context
<b>Conflict and SV</b> / Conflict Background	Background information about the conflict in Northern Uganda between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda; conflict dynamics and human rights violations committed during the conflict
<b>Conflict and SV</b> / Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)	Background information about forms of sexual and gender-based violence committed during the conflict; against women and men
<b>SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN (SVAM)</b>	Background information about crimes of conflict-related sexual violence against men in Northern Uganda; Including dynamics, scope, extent, forms, motivations and explanations, consequences faced by survivors, survivors' experiences
<b>SVAM</b> / Extent	Extent, scope and frequency of sexual violence against men
<b>SVAM</b> / Forms	Different forms of sexual violence against men
<b>SVAM</b> / Dynamics	Overall dynamics of sexual violence against men
<b>SVAM</b> / Motivations	Indicator for the causes and motivations for sexual violence against men; including respondents' explanations for this occurrence
<b>SVAM</b> / Consequences	Consequences of sexual violence faced by male survivors; including physical, psychological and physiological consequences
<b>SVAM</b> / Survivors' Experiences	Narrations of male sexual violence survivors' experiences and lived realities
<b>SVAM</b> / Impact on Masculinities	Male survivors' views of the sexual violations' impact on their masculinities and gender identities
<b>SVAM</b> / Silence	Male survivors' experiences of being silenced (externally, by others) and remaining silent themselves
<b>SVAM</b> / Stigma	Male survivors' experiences of being stigmatized,

	by family and/or community members
<b>RESEARCH EXPERIENCE</b>	Male survivors', experience of the research process; including previous experiences of being interviewed / subjected to research in other studies
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	Translations of various Acholi terms and concepts